

BABY-SNATCHING DEMONS, RESTLESS SOULS AND THE
DANGERS OF CHILDBIRTH: MEDICO-MAGICAL MEANS OF DEALING
WITH SOME OF THE PERILS OF MOTHERHOOD IN ANCIENT
MESOPOTAMIA¹

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Sitting safe in our sanitized modern world, it is hard to imagine what life must have been like in ancient times, when most of one's children died in infancy, while many more either were stillborn or miscarried or, more cruelly yet, were carried away in the flower of their youth, and the greatest single cause of death among women was complications attending childbirth.²

At first glance, the ancient belief in demons would seem to have aggravated an already unbearable situation by adding a host of supernatural dangers to the natural ones. Ancient Mesopotamian mothers had to fear the baneful attentions of Lamaštu, a thoroughly disagreeable hag with pendulous breasts, lion's head, donkey's ears, leopard-like body, and eagle's claws, who prowled about after pregnant women, waiting eagerly for the opportunity to suckle (and kill) the newborn baby.³ Care also had to be taken to ensure that the young one managed to escape the notice of Kūbu or of the mournful lilû-demon whom the gods had doomed to sit in silence in the street and to slip through the windows of people's houses, searching for prey. All this was, of course, assuming that the mother had not been the victim of sorcery designed to make her have a miscarriage before the pregnancy could even come to term.

It was not that the ancient Mesopotamians, despite Herodotos, had any shortage of professional medical experts. There are a number of texts which deal with such feminine problems as abnormally heavy menstrual periods,⁴ infertility,⁵ and complaints⁶ associated with pregnancy⁷ or parturition. Thus, for example, a woman's pregnancy sometimes gave her gas or constrictive pains which was relieved by using genital washes,⁸ or potions.⁹ The presence of the baby could also interfere with the normal functioning of the bowels, giving the pregnant or postpartum woman a case of diarrhea; this was quickly cleared up by feeding her specially prepared brews or cakes.¹⁰

Moreover, a shared belief in magic made it possible for the ancient exorcist¹¹ to supplement the herbs or other natural medicines at his disposal with a powerful

psychological boost to women facing the very real dangers of childbirth.¹² Profuse vaginal bleeding during pregnancy¹³ was obvious cause for alarm and was treated with potions,¹⁴ tampons,¹⁵ vaginal fumigation,¹⁶ and salves applied to the navel or genitals, accompanied by offerings to relevant divinities and/or by magical charms.¹⁷ A relatively complete Neo-Assyrian example reads: "... (the incantation and a recipe for a potion are lost in a lacuna). // You crush together these twenty plant[s]: ..., yellow [mineral dye], reddish yellow mineral dye, al[um], magnetite, [silver beads], gold [beads], black *anzabhu*-frit, (and) 'field mouse tongue'. You mix (the resulting paste) in honey, ghee and calf fat. You recite the incantation three times and then you rub (it) on her navel (and) the opening of her vulva. // A menstruating woman twines together red-colored wool, blue-colored wool, combed wool, sinews from a dead cow, sinews from a male and female gazelle, (and) masculine *ašlu-rush* (and) threads on these nine stones: *ḫaltu*-stone, right-handed *šubû*-stone, left-handed *šubû*-stone, masculine and feminine *šû*-stone, blood-red carnelian, *kapāšu*-shell, *ianibu*-stone, (and) *zibtu*-stone. You tie seven and seven (i.e., fourteen) knots (in the cord). You make burls out of 'Lone'-plant, (and) seeds of 'it purifies' plant (wrapped) with red-colored wool between the knots and stones. You recite the incantation three times over it and then you tie it on her middle. // You take a potsherd (found) standing at a crossroads. You wash (it) with water. You rub (it) with oil. You wrap (it) in red-colored wool. You put it in an isolated place in the house, behind the door. You sprinkle the lower part of the house with water. You set out a censer (burning) juniper (and) *atāšû*-plant. That woman kneels and puts her arms behind her. You recite the incantation three times. She makes a lamentation three times (but) does not prostrate herself (yet). When you have completely done this, you put out *mcrsu*-confection (made with) honey (and) ghee. You pour out a libation. (Then) she prostrates herself. You repeat (the ritual) for three days. When you have done this, you have her drink the (aforementioned) [pot]ion. You rub her with the (aforementioned) salve (and) you tie the (aforementioned) stones on her. On the fourth day, you scatter wormwood(?), *argānu*-conifer, (and) *sagapenum*(?) on the door. That woman makes a lamentation before the door; she makes a lamentation before the goddess *Iš[ar]*. If you recite the incantation three times, she will [get well]."¹⁸

As in this example, the magical charms prescribed for abnormal vaginal bleeding during pregnancy usually include something red, something white and something black. In Mesopotamian magical symbolism, contrasting colors designated separation, as in this example from a ghost repelling ritual: "Incantation (to be used) if a dead person meets with a living person for evil purposes, to keep him away (lit. 'separate') so that he does not see him. // Its ritual: You twine together carded wool and red-dyed wool. You tie seven knots (in the cord). You mix together cedar oil, blood from a man's nose, flour made from šigūšu-grain, earth from an old grave, the tip of a needle, šaš[šūgn]-wood, earth from the roots of a camelthorn, (and) earth from an anthill. You dribble (it on) the knots. Whenever you tie (a knot), you recite the (aforementioned) incantation. [You bind (the knotted wool)] on [his] templ[e]. You have him say as follows. 'Until the red co[m]es to look white (and) the white to look dyed red, may the ghost who meets with me not return and no[t meet] with me at the watch of the 29th."¹⁹ As it happens, the Akkadian verb "to separate" is the same as that used for "to stop (bleeding)." Thus, the colors used in making this charm could be translated: "may the (black) bleeding stop". Should this message not be crystal clear, this and other remedies specify that the cord for the charm be twined by someone who was menstruating (in Akkadian literally a "separated woman").²⁰ Other indications that a blockage was desired²¹ were encoded into the ritual by having the patient kneel with her hands behind her back and by putting a potsherd²² found standing on edge (itself an obvious symbol of obstruction)²³ behind a door in an isolated (again literally "separated") place.

Compare the similar²⁴ remedy preserved in an Old Babylonian text: "When you have taken in hand a kapāšu-shell brought from the mountains (and) when you have threaded it on red-colored wool (and) when you have placed it on that woman's hand (and) when you have smeared the red-colored wool (with) fat from a pure cow (and) when you have taken in hand a potsherd (found standing) at a crossroads (and) when you have rubbed her vulva seven and seven times (with it) (and) when you have recited the spell of Eridu²⁵ (and) when you have bound (it on) the top of the head, the throat (and) limbs of that woman (and) when you have [thrown it?] into the mouth of a river, may the (birth) canal's 'anus' be [dammed up]."²⁶ Mountains are not an obvious source of sea shells, unless the latter are fossilized which would yield good

sense in this context, the charm being in that case an object with a vague resemblance to female genitals²⁷ entrapped in stone. Neither, presumably, is it irrelevant that mountains block a traveller's passage. The binding of the woman's hand and other body parts²⁸ is fairly obviously a sign that suture was desired. Finally, the potsherd, rather than being positioned behind a door in a "separated" place (as in our Neo-Assyrian example), is thrown into the mouth of a river so as to symbolize the desired obstruction of the liquid pouring out of the tail end of the birth canal. Other Old Babylonian remedies actually attempt to "seal" the woman up: "When you have taken in hand a cylinder seal of (right- or left-) handed šubû-stone (and) when you have threaded it on red-colored wool (and) when you have touched it with powerful cornel cherry wood (and) when you have rubbed the front of her (vulva's) 'mouth' seven and seven times (with it), may the (birth) canal's 'anus' be [dammed] up."²⁹

The ancient Mesopotamians believed that abnormal discharges could be brought on by the black arts,³⁰ and indeed the inclusion of magnetite, binding rites, and potsherds in remedies against bleeding during pregnancy³¹ links them to prescriptions designed to prevent sorcery from causing miscarriages:³² "If (you want) sorcery not to approach a pregnant woman, (and) for her not to have a miscarriage, you crush magnetite, antimony, dust, šubû-stone, and dried 'fox' grape. You mix (the resulting paste) with the blood of a female shelduck and you take (it) with cypress oil and you rub (it) on her heart, her hypogastric region and her (vulva's) "head"³³ and you tie on a band³⁴ (made from) a cloth (made) of red-colored wool³⁵ (or you take a potsherd [found] standing on edge at a crossroads and you bury it in the inner threshold and sorcery will be kept at bay)³⁶ and you put masculine šû-stone on her left hand."³⁷

The point of using the magnetite was apparently that the baby was supposed to stay in the womb in the same way that metal filings adhere to a magnet.³⁸ The tying on of the band physically as well as magically blocked the baby's escape route; alternatively the potsherd buried in the inner threshold once again signalled the desired obstruction of a passageway. One of the incantations which accompanied this remedy was directed against the demoness Lamaštu.³⁹ The other two were, rather incongruously, borrowed from prescriptions designed to hush crying babies: "He who lives in the darkness, never seeing the light of the Sun, you have come out and seen

the sunlight. May you be as calm as swamp water; may you sleep like the kid of a gazelle, until the rising of the Sun who releases you (from sleep)."⁴⁰ "He who lives in the darkness, human creature, why did you not cry in the womb of [your] mother? (Not) until you came out and saw the glimmer of the [sun]. You have made [your] dry nur[se] cry; you have frightened [your mother]."⁴¹ The object was presumably to make the foetus lie quietly, thereby increasing its chances of staying safely in the womb.

Other incantations designed to calm pregnant women threatened by sorcery made more direct references to the protection promised by the charm: "You mount the top, bottom, and middle of an ittāmir-stone with gold. You thread it on a band of black wool. You put two blocks of magnetite, two date stones with a link of gold (between them) and two poultices (made) from *hubur*-plant, (palm) heart (and) 'cures twenty'-plant on it. You thread (them) on either side of the ittāmir-stone. You make one burl each wrapped with blue wool on either side (of the pendants). You tie seven knots each on either side (of them). (You recite the incantation: 'The woman is bound with a knot,'⁴² [her vulva's] "mouth" [and] "head" are bound' over the knots which you tie.)⁴³ You recite the spell: 'They have come down to the land' three times over it and you put (the charm) down on the neck of the pregnant woman as a necklace and you wind it tightly around her neck and in her (birth) [month], you take it down from her and for one month from her giving birth, you must not see her."⁴⁴

According to ancient stone lists, the ittāmir-stone was the color of uncooked ox blood (like the tavern-keeper's stone), but was dotted with specks of iron.⁴⁵ Its appearance suggests that it was intended to represent the partially formed foetus, whose desired retention in the womb was signalled by mounting it in gold and surrounding it on either side with magical stones, plants, and burls finished off by seven and seven knots. Since the knots were designed to keep the foetus from emerging, it was, of course, necessary to remove them before the actual birth could take place.⁴⁶ The accompanying incantation is quoted as follows: "They have come down to the land--the sorceresses (and) deceitful women. (The former) cry out 'illuru'; (the latter) respond with a song. They carry sea water from the vast ocean; they let it flow into the streets. They bind the young men; they murder the young women; they produce silence. I will set the tiskur-plant against you to shut off

(*sekēru*) your mouths,⁴⁷ *anḫullu*-plant which will not accept (*maḫāru*) sorcery, dispelling wood which dispels sorcery, 'cures twenty' which does not allow (sorcerous) phlegm to approach the body, ittāmir-stone which can dispel the machinations of seven sorceresses. It will turn your sorcery and your (sorcerous) phlegm to (harmless) wind!"⁴⁸

It must be remembered that the pregnant woman in question would have been a firm believer in sorcery, which made her susceptible to a hysterical (and dangerous) reaction if she found something nasty which a jealous neighbor had left at her door.⁴⁹ Although Mesopotamian exorcists also believed in sorcery, they were not unaware of the positive psychological effects of prophylactics: "A bandage for releasing a pregnant woman or a woman in confinement to whom something (evil) was shown. If you put it on her neck, they can show (it) to her (all they want) and it will not affect her."⁵⁰ In other words, armed with an appropriate magical protection, the expectant mother would not be frightened into having a miscarriage. Attempts were also made to prevent miscarriages by applying ground up bones (i.e., calcium).⁵¹

Once the danger of miscarriage had passed, it was time to safeguard the mother from the dangers of childbirth itself. It would not do to deliver the baby in some improvised way. The birth of a child was attended by a ritual which, according to myth, commemorated the first creation of mankind by the goddess Bēlet-ilī. Men seem, as a rule, to have been banned from the birth room,⁵² perhaps on the grounds that their presence there would mean disaster.⁵³ Childbirth was normally attended by a midwife (*šabsūtu*) and/or *qadištu* (or other holy woman with similar responsibilities).⁵⁴ As the woman neared time for the birth,⁵⁵ the midwife covered her head and girded her loins and then, reciting blessings with a beaming, joyful face,⁵⁶ she drew a circle of flour on which she laid an unbaked brick.⁵⁷ If all went well, the baby would be safely delivered by her skill alone; if there were complications, the male exorcist had to be called in.⁵⁸

We might say that such complications were due to some combination of physical and psychological causes. Ancient Mesopotamian exorcists thought in terms of internally and externally induced problems. On the one hand, a woman might experience difficulties caused by what the ancient Mesopotamians understood (correctly) as an overly narrow birth canal;⁵⁹ one of the expressions for a woman

having difficulty giving birth literally means "she who has been made (too) narrow." Note also the frequent references to locked doors as, for example, "The woman in travail is having difficulty giving birth; she is having difficulty giving birth. The infant is stuck fast; the infant is stuck so fast as to end (her) life. The door bolt is secure; the door is made fast against the suckling kid."⁶⁰ "May her massive mooring rope be loosened, and may her locked gate be opened. (May) the mooring rope of the boat (be moored) to the quay of health, the mooring rope of the *magurru*-boat to the quay of life. May the limbs be relaxed; may the sinews be slackened. May the sealed places be loosened; may the offspring come out, a separate body, a human creature. May he come out promptly and see the light of the sun."⁶¹ "From the fluids of intercourse was created a skeleton; from the tissue of the muscles was created an offspring. In the turbulent and fearful sea waters, in the distant waters of the ocean where the little one's arms are bound, whose midst the eye of the sun does not illumine, Asallu^{hi}, the son of Enki, saw him. He loosened his many-knotted bonds. He made a path for him; he opened a way for him, (saying): 'Paths are [ope]ned for you; ways are a[lot]ted to you. She (...) sits (waiting) for you, she who created ..., she who created all of us."⁶² She has told the lock bar: "You are released."⁶³ The door bolts are [loo]sened; the doors are [left open]. Let him strike ... Let yourself out like a favorite child."⁶⁴ It is probable that some patients, particularly adolescent girls giving birth for the first time⁶⁵ were, indeed, overly tensed.

Whatever difficulties a woman giving birth normally had could, however, be complicated by the evil spells cast by sorcerers. Ancient Mesopotamian exorcists did not waste time trying to pin such machinations on particular suspects; they treated sorcery as a demonic force to be combatted with prayer and the ritual destruction of figurines. The punishment of the actual culprit (whoever that might be) could safely be left to the gods. We have a prayer to the Sun-god Šamaš in which the god is asked to loosen the (sorcerer's) knot from a woman's womb in order that she may safely give birth: "This woman, daughter of her god--let her (womb's) knot be loosed before your godship; may this woman give birth safely; may she give birth and live; may her foetus come straight out; may she give birth safely and so sing your praises; may the sorcery (and) evil machinations be dispelled before your godship."⁶⁶ The idea that a womb could be knotted shut so as to prevent childbirth is also reflected in the

Babylonian version of the Flood story in which the gods respond to human overpopulation by seeing to it that the womb is bound so as not to allow the infant to pass through the birth canal.⁶⁷

The means by which the sorcerer or sorceress had achieved this effect were not far to seek. Did the exorcist himself not know any number of binding, sealing, and obstructing rites which were to be performed over pregnant women? However legitimate such rites might be when the object of the exercise was to prevent the loss of the baby or an effusion of blood which was dangerous to the mother and/or her unborn child, they could be fatal if performed by some malicious individual over a woman who was about to give birth. In the context of childbirth, it was precisely the unobstructed passage of the child through the birth canal and the accompanying outflow of amniotic fluid and blood which the exorcists' rituals and incantations were designed to produce. It should thus not surprise us to find that, whereas one of the remedies against effusion has the exorcist bind the patient with a red(?) thread,⁶⁸ in the childbirth incantations, it is precisely the fact that the vulva of the patient had been bound (as with) a thread that is cited as the reason for the exorcist's intervention.⁶⁹

If the baby took too long to come,⁷⁰ attendants intervened to hasten the process and, it was hoped, to save the mother's life.⁷¹ If the baby was dead in the womb, drugs could be administered to induce an abortion: "In order to make a [pregnant [woman] lose her foetus, [you c]rush [together] these eight plants: [the excrement of] a speckled wall [liza]rd, the seed of 'lone plant', *ašqulātu*-vine, *azupīru*-like plant, *namruqu*-plant, mullein(?) root, (and) innkeeper's ... If you have her drink (the mixture) in wine on an empty stomach, she will lose her [foe]tus. // [If ditto], you crush [the excrement of] a wall [li]zard. If she drinks (it) [in bee]r on an empty stomach, she will lose her [foe]tus".⁷² Note that the second remedy is identical with one which another text recommends to induce labor.⁷³ Doubtless many of the other remedies could also be used for either purpose, as desired.

If the baby was still alive, the doctor might try greasing the woman's vulva⁷⁴ or might take measures to hasten labor,⁷⁵ either by massaging the mother's abdomen and loins or by giving her a potion designed to expedite the birth.⁷⁶ Pressure alone might be expected to provide good results, but not just any method of applying it

would do. The exorcist was specifically instructed to massage the patient's abdomen in a downwards direction,⁷⁷ and he either used a lubricant on his hands⁷⁸ or rolled a stick-like object over her⁷⁹ to ensure a smooth and even massaging action.⁸⁰

The lubricants used for hastening labor were, moreover, manufactured from substances believed to assist in giving birth,⁸¹ usually for reasons of analogy.⁸² A typical example uses hailstones, dust from the parapet of a fallen wall, and dust from a leaky drainpipe⁸³ in the hope that: "Like a hailstone (which can never go back to the heavens), may the (foetus) not be able to return to what is behind him. Like one who has fallen from a wall, may he not be able to turn his breast. Like a leaky drainpipe (which cannot hold water), may none of the (mother's) waters remain."⁸⁴ Similarly, it would not do to use just any stick; the exorcist was instructed to employ a herdsman's staff⁸⁵ made from cornel cherry wood⁸⁶ or else a thick reed⁸⁷ with the ends clipped off which had been filled with magical dust moistened with oil.⁸⁸

For the esoterically minded, there was an additional, more learned, set of lore as to why such ingredients were effective in assisting childbirth. A commentary explains the use of a reed from a small marsh, dust from a crossroads, and oil as follows: "When you take in hand a reed from a small marsh (GI ÈN.BAR.BÀN.DA): GI means 'woman'; BAR means 'to come out'; BÀN.DA means 'infant' or 'small one'. 'Dust from a (cross)roads': SAĤAR means 'dust'; 'dust' (SAĤAR) and 'little one' (šaĥar) are the same thing; 'crossroads' (SILA.LAM₄.MA): SI means 'to come straight out said of going'; LA means 'not' or 'little one'; AM.MA means 'seed'. 'Oil' (šamnu): ŠÁ (read "nig") means 'woman'; AM means 'seed'; NU means 'to create'. Secondly, Ī (read "i") is 'oil' and I means 'to come out said of seed'.⁸⁹ The author of this commentary also gives the learned explanation for the efficacy of hail stones and dust from fallen walls and leaky drainpipes: "Hail stone from heaven: stone (abnu); AB means 'to create in the sense of giving birth'; NU means 'seed'; the Sumerian for hail is U.GU₄; U means 'to create'; GU means 'to give birth'; the Sumerian for 'heaven' is AN; AN (also) means 'seed'. 'Dust from an fallen wall': the Sumerian for wall is BÀD (this sign consists of a KÉŠ-sign with a BAD-sign drawn inside it); KÉŠ means 'bond'; BAD means 'to open'; when it says 'fallen' that is because Sumerian SI.A means 'to buckle said of a wall'; SI means 'to come straight out said of going'; A means 'little one'. 'Dust from a leaky drainpipe': the Sumerian

for drainpipe is GÁ (read "ma"); GÁ (also) means 'to go'.⁹⁰ There is no reason to suppose that exorcists did not also subscribe to the simpler, more folkloric, explanations which were contained in the incantations actually recited over the patient. After all, the more reasons behind an ingredient's effectiveness, the better for all concerned. Still, it is perhaps just as well that the learned kept such highly intellectualized explanations as we have quoted above strictly to themselves.

While rubbing the expectant mother's abdomen or administering potions to hasten labor, ancient Mesopotamian exorcists also recited incantations⁹¹ designed to enlist supernatural aid for the woman in travail and, incidentally, to increase her chances of survival by convincing her that she was not doomed to die. These incantations often display a touching concern for the suffering patient. In one Middle Assyrian example,⁹² the pregnant woman is compared to a warrior in the throes of battle: "The mother is enveloped in the dust of death. Like a chariot she is enveloped in the dust of battle; like a plow she is enveloped in the dust of the woods. Like a warrior in the fray, she is cast down in her blood. Her eyes are dimmed; she cannot see. Her lips are covered; she cannot open (them). Her eyes are clouded (with?) a deathly fate or fates. Her ... continually tremble; her ears do not hear. Her breast is not tight (ly corsetted); her headcloths are scattered. She is not covered with a cloak, (yet) she is not ashamed.⁹³ Merciful Marduk,⁹⁴ stand by and ... (With) this confusion am I surrounded, so come to me. Bring forth that sealed up one, a creation of the gods, a creation of man. Let it come out and see the light."⁹⁵

Other incantations compare the placenta containing the male or female baby to a moored boat⁹⁶ laden with precious cargo of carnelian (i.e., a boy) or lapis lazuli (i.e., a girl):⁹⁷ "[The woman who is about to give birth is steering the boat through the water.] ... [From] the horizon, the woman who is about to give birth is steering the boat through the water.⁹⁸ Upon a boat (for carrying) perfumes she has loaded perfumes. Upon a boat (for carrying) cedar she has loaded cedar. Upon a boat (for carrying) cedar fragrance she has loaded cedar fragrance. (Upon) a boat (for carrying) carnelian and lapis lazuli she has loaded carnelian and lapis lazuli; (yet) she knows not if it is carnelian; she knows not if it is lapis lazuli.⁹⁹ The boat, when it has spent time at the quay, leaves the quay."¹⁰⁰ "The boat is detained at the quay of death; the magurru-boat is held back at the quay of hardship. [At the command of] Šin, lord

of spells, may the boat be loosed [from the quay of death; [may] the *magurru*-boat be freed [from the quay of hardship]."¹⁰¹

A different use of the boat motif¹⁰² appears in the heart-rending lament commissioned in the Neo-Assyrian period by a husband who had lost a wife in childbirth: "'Why are you cast adrift like a boat in the midst of the stream, your rungs broken, your ropes cut? Why, your face veiled, do you cross the river of Assur?' 'How could I not be cast adrift, my ropes not be cut? On the day I bore fruit, how happy I was! I was happy; happy my husband. On the day of my labor pains, my face was overcast; on the day I gave birth, my eyes were clouded. With my hands opened (in supplication), I prayed to Bēlet-ilī (saying): 'You are the mother of those who give birth, save my life!' (But) when Bēlet-ilī heard me, she veiled her face (saying): '... why do you keep praying to me?' ... [In] those days (when) I was with my husband, (when) I lived with him who was my lover, death slunk stealthily into my bedroom. He made me leave my house; he separated me from my husband (and) set my feet to a land from which I will never return.'"¹⁰³

Perhaps the most picturesque of the incantations designed to help in cases of difficult childbirth tells the story of the Moon-god and the cow¹⁰⁴--an aetiological myth invented to "explain" how a male god (the Moon-god, Sîn) came to be a patron¹⁰⁵ of childbirth¹⁰⁶ and to reassure the expectant mother that the treatment she was receiving had been tried successfully at least once before. According to this myth, there was once a cow who was so alluring that the Moon-god himself became enamored of her: "One cow of Sîn, 'Maid of Sîn' (was) her name, she was richly adorned; she was luxuriant in shape. Sîn saw her and loved her."¹⁰⁷ Her divine lover saw to it that the cow was well looked after by her herdsmen (perhaps hinting at a similar pampering of pregnant women?)¹⁰⁸ and took his will of her in the form of a vigorous but invisible bull: "He put the shining of ... Sîn on her. He had her take the lead of the herd, going as herdsman after her. They pastured her on grass among the juiciest grasses; they gave her water to drink in the most satisfying of watering places. Concealed from the herd boy, without the herdsman seeing, a vigorous fat (bull) mounted the cow; he reared up (over) her tail(?)."¹⁰⁹

In other versions, the details of impregnation are omitted: "I am the great cow of Sîn, belonging to Sîn; I am pregnant and ready to gore. With my horn, I thrash

the earth; with my tail, I make the whirlwind pass along."¹¹⁰ In reciting this, the exorcist was probably supposed to be speaking on behalf of the pregnant woman.¹¹¹ In one of the Sumerian incantations the identification between woman having difficulty giving birth and the mythic cow is so close as to make translation almost embarrassing: "The handsome bull has mounted [the female] in the fold, in the pure pen; he has deposited in her womb the true [seed] of mankind. The [sperm] deposited in her [womb] having coagulated, having given the male an offspring, [the female] put her teeth to the honey plant¹¹² and fattened herself with it; she put her teeth to the honey plant, her favorite food, and fattened herself with it."¹¹³

In any case, the cow and her herdsmen were understandably quite upset when, the requisite number of months later, she went into a quite unexpected labor: "At the coming to an end of her days (and) the completion of her months, the cow became frightened; it frightened her herdsman. His face was downcast; all the herd boys mourned with him. At her bellowing; at her cries in labor, he threw himself to the ground".¹¹⁴ Fortunately, the Moon-god heard the cow's cries and sent female protective divinities armed with oil from a *pūru*-vessel¹¹⁵ and water to help her: "In heaven, the moon-crescent, Sîn, heard her cry. He raised his hand towards heaven. Two protective divinities came down from heaven and one of them was carrying oil in a *pūru*-vessel. The other one brought down the water of giving birth."¹¹⁶ These worthies smeared the oil onto her forehead and sprinkled her with water, and on the third application round, she gave birth to a healthy calf: "They smeared oil from a *pūru*-vessel onto her forehead. They sprinkled the water of giving birth over her whole body. A second time, they smeared oil from a *pūru*-vessel onto her forehead (and) sprinkled the water of giving birth over her whole body. While (they were) smearing it on a third time, the calf fell on the ground like a young gazelle. He/she made his name 'Suckling Calf'.¹¹⁷ Similarly, it is hoped, the midwife will not be kept waiting for the new baby: "Just as 'Maid of Sîn' gave birth straightaway, so may the adolescent who is having difficulty give birth. May the midwife not be kept waiting; may the pregnant woman be all right."¹¹⁸

In an alternative version of this myth, the poor cow's situation is so serious that not only the Moon-god, Sîn, but also the Sun-god, Šamaš, became involved: "A cow is pregnant, a cow gives birth in the fold of Šamaš, the pen of Šakkan.¹¹⁹ Šamaš

saw her, crying; the (moon) whose rites are pure saw her, the tears coming (to his eyes). Why does Šamaš cry (and) the pure-in-rite's tears come? 'For my cow which has not been opened, for my she-goat which has not given birth!¹²⁰ [Wh]om should I s[end]? [Whom should I dis]pa[tch to] the s[ev]en [and seven daughter]s of Anu? May they ... their pot of ... May they (the daughters of Anu) make the infant come straight out to me.¹²¹ Whether it be a male like (his) begetter¹²² or a girl like a second-rank wife(?), may (the infant) fall to the ground."¹²³

If ancient Mesopotamian gods were not above concerning themselves with the problems of women in childbirth, neither were the kings of legend. According to Mesopotamian mythology, the first Sumerian king, Etana, who was married but childless, went on a quest to find the plant of birth¹²⁴ and succeeded after a very nearly fatal flight to heaven on the back of an eagle.¹²⁵

The midwife's duties were hardly completed by the safe delivery of the baby. Much care was taken in severing the baby's umbilical cord. The cutting was done either with a knife¹²⁶ or with a sliver of reed: "the reed is what cuts the umbilical cord";¹²⁷ "she (Nintu) unsheathed for it (the birth brick) the reed-sliver (taken from) the canebrake, severer of the umbilical cord."¹²⁸ This latter usage may sound a bit strange, but since reeds were cheap and readily available, a separate reed could have been used for every patient which might, like our own disposable needles, have presented considerably less danger of infection to the patient than the physician's knife. It would appear that, in at least some cases, a reed was filled with salve and was broken over the baby's navel,¹²⁹ presumably in order that its contents might soothe the wound.

According to "Enki and the World Order", the umbilical cord cutter was accompanied by *immanakku*-stone (in this case probably coarse sand)¹³⁰ and by a leek, presumably used to stop the bleeding.¹³¹ Also mentioned alongside the birth brick and the cutter for the umbilical cord in "Enki and the World Order" was a water pail, probably used for cleaning the blood from mother and baby.¹³² A difficult incantation with attached ritual appears to read: "She (the midwife) rubs his (the newborn's) breast with oil. She inserts her finger into his mouth. He will put down the amniotic fluid(?)."¹³³ A similar practice of clearing the newborn's mouth with a finger is attested from modern Iran.¹³⁴ The Ninisinna hymn also describes midwifely

duties as including: "to make the son of a man, once he has been caught by the thighs, to scream loudly; to put his abdomen towards the ground (i.e., to turn him over) (and) to make (him) exchange places with (his) head (i.e., to turn him upside down)."¹³⁵ One thinks immediately of the modern practice of dangling the child upside down and smacking it on the bottom to make it gasp and cry in order to clear its lungs. Last, but not least, was the ceremony of handing to the child objects appropriate to its sex: for a boy, weapons,¹³⁶ and for a girl, a spindle and *kirissu*¹³⁷ or a crucible.¹³⁸ Compare our own practice of putting babies in cribs decorated with pink or blue ribbons and of offering guns or dolls as toys, depending on the sex of the child.

Postpartum care for the mother, if complicated, was the responsibility of the exorcist. If, during the efforts of childbirth, the woman's peritoneum was torn, a salve containing ground up cowrie shell or acacia was applied.¹³⁹ "Fallen" anuses required a salve or potion containing oak(?) leaves.¹⁴⁰

Action was also taken if the woman failed to expel the afterbirth and/or the blood and amniotic fluid normally accompanying childbirth,¹⁴¹ suffered postpartum pains,¹⁴² had a fever and/or showed signs of internal pus.¹⁴³ To make a woman "release" the lochia, resourceful exorcists had the patient sit over smoking herb-filled jars,¹⁴⁴ inserted medicinally treated tampons for a day or until signs of the impending expulsion could be discerned,¹⁴⁵ fed her specially prepared potions,¹⁴⁶ rubbed her down with oil,¹⁴⁷ administered genital washes,¹⁴⁸ or bandaged her nether regions with medicine-soaked cloths.¹⁴⁹

The symptoms described (piercing pains, internal suppuration, and fever with vomiting) suggest that puerperal infections were involved.¹⁵⁰ As for why the expulsion of the afterbirth and lochia should command so much attention in this connection, it should be noted that "The most common manifestation of puerperal infection is endometritis. ... There is usually retention of lochia and possibly of fragments of placenta or membrane. When there is free drainage or artificial removal of this culture material, the signs and symptoms disappear rapidly."¹⁵¹ This is not, of course, to say that the methods employed by the ancient Mesopotamians (and subsequently by the Greeks, Arabs and Europeans)¹⁵² to achieve these effects would necessarily be approved of by a modern doctor.

Another method for encouraging the descent of the placenta and amniotic

fluid was for the exorcist to "have her (the patient) enter a grave."¹⁵³ This may sound strange, but giving the woman a terrible fright might be expected to produce a parasympathetic reaction which would indeed have fulfilled the predicted result: "She will not experience gas but will release (it)."¹⁵⁴

In many of the medical remedies designed to give relief to pregnant and postpartum women (and especially noticeable in those involving pessaries or genital washes), the ingredients were put into a solution of alcohol, charred, roasted, boiled or even heated in an oven.¹⁵⁵ These preparatory procedures would have served to increase the efficacy of these prescriptions by killing germs which might otherwise have infected the patient. This is particularly important for those medicines designed to enter the body via the vulva (even today instruments to be used in delivering babies are autoclaved).

The final duty of the midwife was to see to the afterbirth. Mentioned alongside the birth brick, the cutter for the umbilical cord, and the water pail, as belonging to the paraphernalia of a midwife in "Enki and the World Order" was an object which is probably¹⁵⁶ to be identified with the "vessel in which the afterbirth is placed" of the hymn to Ninisinna.¹⁵⁷ This last was presumably used for disposal.¹⁵⁸

The newborn baby, if sickly, came under the exorcist's care--one tablet of the ancient Mesopotamian diagnostic series is devoted entirely to the medical problems of infants.¹⁵⁹ Unfortunately, despite the exorcist's best efforts, infant mortality remained high. If medical means were inadequate, however, the exorcist could still exercise what modern doctors refer to as the placebo effect or, if the child was too young to benefit, at least he could try to provide some comfort to the anxious mother.

The Kūbu-demon was a ghoulish nuisance whose malevolence was particularly directed at newborn babies: "If the infant is hot all over and his epigastrium is protuberant, it is the hand of Kūbu. If the muscles of the infant's chest are speckled with red and green spots, it is the hand of Kūbu. If the infant's bowels have cramps and are speckled with green spots, it is the hand of Kūbu. If the infant is constantly cold and he grinds his teeth, his illness will be prolonged, it is seizure by Kūbu";¹⁶⁰ "If it (the infant) cries during the evening without interruption and does not want to drink milk, it is the hand of Kūbu. If (the infant) wheezes before it is put to bed, it is the hand of Kūbu. If it continually cries and wheezes, it is the hand of

Kūbu."¹⁶¹ It is difficult to say what this corresponds to in modern terms, but neonatal sepsis seems to be indicated.

This demon's¹⁶² personality profile falls into a pattern which we shall see repeated over and over again, whereby the victim of demonic attack is confronted by the unattractive¹⁶³ possessor of unfulfilled desires:¹⁶⁴ "Kūbu who was not buried in a grave";¹⁶⁵ "like Kūbu, never able to suck his mother's milk";¹⁶⁶ "the Kūbu of nadītu, qadištu, kulmašītu, and ištarītu of Anu; the little ones who do not know their own names (and) who never saw the sun."¹⁶⁷ "Seeing the light (of the sun)" is a typical metaphor for live birth;¹⁶⁸ this and the reference to being unable to suckle indicates that Kūbu was the demonic manifestation of stillborn children.¹⁶⁹

Kūbu is sometimes invoked in personal names as a sort of divine patron.¹⁷⁰ It seems likely, although there is obviously no way to prove it, that persons with such names as "My Kūbu is my strength" and "Servant of Kūbu" were born to women whose previous attempt at having a child had resulted in a stillbirth or malformed foetus.¹⁷¹ In this way, the unhappy ghost could be made to feel a desired part of the family, rather than being left to inflict "hand of Kūbu-illness" on its normal sibling.¹⁷² Perhaps more to the point, the mother did not have to feel guilty about the previous attempt at childbirth which was unsuccessful. Mesopotamian mothers might also find consolation in the belief that stillborn children received special treatment in the Netherworld: "(In your visit to the realm of the dead) did you see my little stillborn children who never knew existence?' 'I saw (them).' 'How do they fare?' 'They play at a table of gold and silver, (laden with) ghee and honey.'"¹⁷³

The protection of the newborn against such potential demonic threats began with the birth. We have mentioned the fact that the midwife drew a circle of flour on which she laid an unbaked brick as part of the preparations for birth. This brick seems to have been more than just a birth stool, since it was left in the place where the woman had given birth for seven or nine days in honor of the birth goddess.¹⁷⁴ Combining the information given in ancient Mesopotamian texts with similar customs observed in modern Iran, it is possible to reconstruct the birth brick's ritual as follows. After the preparations for the birth had been made, the baby was delivered onto the brick, followed by the afterbirth. After the umbilical cord had been severed and both mother and baby had been cleaned up, the afterbirth was left with the brick in the

birth chamber for the requisite number of days, and then both brick and afterbirth were buried (or otherwise disposed of) together.¹⁷⁵

The ancient Mesopotamian texts do not explain the significance of these actions; however, it is possible to make a suggestion. In Iran and Iraq, the afterbirth is considered to be the double of the baby or a sort of twin connected to it by the umbilical cord.¹⁷⁶ Obviously, this twin was not actually born alive, which would make it a prime candidate for the sort of demonic activity engaged in by malformed births and stillborn children. In other words, one might suppose that the child's afterbirth (conceived of as a sort of aborted twin) would try to kill it, a possibility which would make some sort of apotropaic ritual necessary.¹⁷⁷

This, in turn, suggests a likely explanation for the role of the magical brick. Mesopotamian omens compare placental material to clay or bricks, presumably since it resembles bloody clay in appearance,¹⁷⁸ and indeed it was from bloody clay that mankind was created, according to Mesopotamian legend.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the demonic manifestation of stillborn fetuses (*Kūbu*) was a patron of glazed brick manufacture,¹⁸⁰ perhaps because *Kūbu*, being human clay "baked" (in the womb), was considered an appropriate patron for a craft in which the successful baking of glazed bricks (in an oven) was desired.¹⁸¹

If placental material and fetuses resemble bricks, then a brick will provide an obvious surrogate, particularly if the baby has been brought into contact with it. By subsequently bringing the placenta into contact with the brick, leaving them together, harmlessly trapped inside a magic circle,¹⁸² for a magically potent number of days, and then burying or otherwise disposing of them together, the midwife could, in effect, give the placenta another "twin" to take the place of the baby which had been separated from it when the umbilical cord was cut.

Such precautions could not, however, protect the child or adolescent against more serious demonic threats. The *lilû*-demons and their female counterparts the *lilitu* or *ardat lili*-demons were hungry for victims because they had once been human; they were the spirits of young men and women who had themselves died young.¹⁸³ If a girl had the misfortune of dying before she had had the opportunity to marry or have children, it was believed that her ghost was forever doomed to prowl the earth in the form of a *lilitu* or *ardat lili*-demon: "*ardat-lili* slips in a man's window; young girl

not fated (to be married); young woman who was never impregnated like a woman; young woman who was never deflowered like a woman; young girl who never experienced sexual pleasure in her husband's lap; young girl who never removed a garment in her husband's lap; young woman whose garment-pin a good man never loosened; young women in whose breasts there never was milk, who cries in pain; young girl who was never filled with sexual pleasure in the lap of a young man, who never had her fill of desire; young girl who never had (her own) women's quarters, whom they did not call by the name: 'mother'; young girl who in desolation mistreated (her) cheeks; young girl who never rejoiced with (other) young girls; young girl who was never seen during her(!) city's festival, does not raise her eyes; young girl who was snatched away from a husband in her women's quarters; young girl who never had a husband, never gave birth to a child; young girl who never had a husband, never brought forth a child; young girl who never had a husband, never had a child; young girl who was snatched away from a husband, snatched away from a child; young girl who was driven from her father-in-law's house; *ardat-lili* who was driven out the window like the wind; *ardat-lili* whose ghost (when she died) was not in her mouth; *ardat-lili* whose heartache carried her (down) to the nether world; *ardat-lili* whom the 'hand of Ištar' mistreated in the (family) nest; *ardat-lili* who roams outside in the broad steppe."¹⁸⁴

Similarly, men who had died young became *lilû*-demons: "[Young man] who always sits, silent and [al]one, [in] the street; [young] man who cries bitterly in the grip of his death-demon; young man to whose fate silence was attached; young man to whom his mother, crying, gave birth in the street; young man whose body grief has burnt; young man whose god has evil[ly] [b]ound him; young man whose goddess has cut him off; young man who never married a wife, never raised a child; young man who never experienced sexual pleasure in his wife's lap; young man who never removed a garment in his wife's lap; young man who was driven out of the house of his father-in-law".¹⁸⁵ Note that the young man's deprivation is not restricted to purely sexual satisfaction. It was presumably because he longed for fulfillment as a father¹⁸⁶ that the *lilû*-demon preyed on suckling children.¹⁸⁷

Lilû- and *lilitu*-demons slipped through windows into people's houses¹⁸⁸ looking for victims to take the place of husbands and wives whom they themselves

never had.¹⁸⁹ Who could argue with such a persuasive demon? "I am the son of a prince," he tells her. 'I will fill your lap with silver and gold.' 'You be the wife, and I will be your husband,' he tells her. 'I will make your riches (as abundant) as the fruit of the garden.'¹⁹⁰ Those whose personal god was not vigilant soon found themselves possessed¹⁹¹ and, if nothing was done, they were carried off to an early death to swell the ranks of the *lilû*-and *lilitu*-demons.¹⁹² Fortunately, these restless souls could be soothed¹⁹³ (and prevented from doing any further harm by pairing them with each other,¹⁹⁴ and sending the newly united couple, properly provisioned, home to the underworld.¹⁹⁵

The most serious threat of all was the demoness *Lamaštu*. She was a minor divinity, a daughter of the sky-god *Anu*. She was certainly a menace, particularly to newborn babies: "She touches the womb of the woman in confinement, she snatches the child from the nursemaid,"¹⁹⁶ and she had a disagreeable taste for human flesh and blood: "She continually drinks the dried(?)¹⁹⁷ blood of men, flesh that is not to be eaten, bones that are not to be cracked. You, daughter of *Anu*, have continually taken the bread of tears and wailing as (your) provision; you continually drink the dried(?) blood of men, flesh that is not to be eaten, bones that are not to be cracked".¹⁹⁸ Fortunately for the sufferer, her unnatural appetites were equally disagreeable to the gods: "On account of her plan which was not good (and) her improper counsel,¹⁹⁹ *Anu* her father dashed her to the earth from the heavens."²⁰⁰

It is interesting to compare *Lamaštu*'s address to her father: "The daughter of *Anu* went before *Ellil*, her father, saying: 'Bring me what I ask of you, my father *Ellil*: the flesh of mankind which is not good (to eat), the coagulated(?) blood of men"²⁰¹ with the speech which is supposed to cause the toothache worm to be crushed by the god *Ea* to the sufferer's benefit: "The worm went, weeping, before *Šamaš*, his tears flowing before *Ea*, (saying): 'What have you given me to eat? What have you given me to suck?' 'I have given you the ripe fig, the apricot (and) the apple.' What are they to me--the ripe fig or the apricot (and) apple? Lift me up and make me dwell between the teeth and the jaw. Let me suck the blood of the tooth and gnaw on the particles (caught) in the jaw! ... Because you said this, worm, may *Ea* strike you with his mighty hand."²⁰²

The close similarities between these passages would seem to imply that, as in

the case of the toothache worm, *Lamaštu*'s less than edifying speech was repeated in the hope that it would make the gods irritated enough for them to force *Lamaštu* to cooperate in the cure. Indeed, *Anu*'s reply to his daughter is: "Because you asked this of me, may they make [your] house from clods of earth; let a young slave girl bring you a broken comb (and) a spindle with hot broth cooked in the embers."²⁰³ The reference is to gifts given to *Lamaštu* in return for her speedy exit from her victim. Other incantations follow *Lamaštu*'s request to suckle (and kill) human children with: "Ea, her 'father', heard her and (said): 'Instead, Daughter of *Anu*, directress of mankind, of your continually taking (the bread of tears and wailing) as (your) provision, instead of having your hands laid in flesh and blood, instead of entering houses (and) leaving houses, receive from the merchant his *qannu* and his travel provisions; receive from the iron smith the bracelets appropriate to your hands and feet; receive from the silver smith the earrings appropriate to your ears; receive from the seal-cutter the carnelian appropriate to your neck; receive from the carpenter the comb, spindle, *tudītu-pin*,²⁰⁴ distaff, and the *kirissu* appropriate to your thread."²⁰⁵ or: "*Anu* heard (*Lamaštu*'s request to suckle human children), wailing; (the birth goddess) *Aruru-Bēlet-ilī* (heard), her tear[s] flowing (and they said). 'Why should we destroy[y] what we have created and (why) should the wind carry off what we have caused to exist? Take her away and ... (her) in the sea. Tie her to a tamarisk standing to one side or to a solitary reed stalk.' Just as a corpse no longer has [life] and the stillborn child never suckled the milk of [his] mother, so may the daughter of *Anu*, like smoke, go up to heaven and not be able to return."²⁰⁶

Unloved and unlovable as she was, *Lamaštu* had ample reason to be disagreeable--the poor thing was hardly the vision of loveliness. Moreover, her personality profile strikingly resembles the role played in other societies by the ghosts of women who had died in childbirth.²⁰⁷ Her behavior was less that of a demon who delighted in destruction for its own sake than that of a frustrated mother: "The daughter of *Anu* daily counts the pregnant women; she goes around after those (about to) give birth. She counts up their [months]; she marks the days (of their confinement) onto the wall. For the lying-in women giving birth (this) is (her) incantation: 'Bring me your sons so that I can give them suck; let me put the breast into the mouth of your daughters.'"²⁰⁸ The suckling in question was, obviously, fatal.

Moreover, in her eagerness to suckle babies, this demonic midwife seems sometimes to have caused them to be born before their time; a number of remedies against sorcery-induced miscarriages also include incantations directed at Lamaštu.²⁰⁹

One expects infants bothered by Lamaštu to show signs of restlessness, and indeed ancient Mesopotamian diagnostic texts state: "If the infant is continually frightened at its mother's breast (and) cries continually, or if it is continually disturbed (and) he jumps from the lap of his mother and cries a lot, the daughter of Anu has chosen him";²¹⁰ "If the infant continually cries and screams, it is the snatcher, 'hand of a goddess--the daughter of Anu'."²¹¹ Not surprisingly, Lamaštu also appears in texts directed at calming crying babies.²¹²

What is perhaps less expected is the striking correlation between further symptoms attributed to Lamaštu and a specific disease, namely typhoid fever, which is to this day a prominent cause of infant deaths in Iraq. In children, "vomiting, abdominal distention and diarrhea are common. The temperature may be variable but can reach as high as 106° F. Seizures may be observed. Hepatomegaly (enlarged liver), jaundice, anorexia (loss of appetite) and weight loss can be marked. ... Mental depression, delirium, and stupor all have been observed. ... A maculopapular rash may be observed in as many as 80% of patients. It occurs in the skin of the lower chest and abdomen, appearing in successive crops of 10-30 lesions that are 1-6 mm in diameter and last 2-3 days."²¹³ The initial rash consists of six to ten of these "rose-spots".²¹⁴ According to one ancient Mesopotamian incantation, Lamaštu was supposed to have taken hold of the baby by his abdomen seven times with her long claw-like fingernails,²¹⁵ presumably thereby producing seven (or was it thirty-five?) red spots in that part of his anatomy.

This by itself would seem to be a fairly clear reference to the typhoid rash,²¹⁶ and indeed the symptoms quoted in ancient Mesopotamian diagnostic omens are consistent with this diagnosis. They include loss of appetite: "If the infant, when he is born, goes two or three days and does not take milk and he has an attack similar to 'hand of a god' (qāt ili), it is called 'hand of a goddess--the snatcher (Lamaštu)'; he will die"²¹⁷; abdominal distension or diarrhea: "If ditto (the infant's bowels are inflated and he cries continually), it is the hand of the daughter of Anu; (alternatively) it is the hand of a god (and) he will get well";²¹⁸ "If the infant does not have a fever (but) his

bowels are contracted by cramps and he cries, it is seizure by the daughter of Anu"²¹⁹; and especially fever: "If the infant has fever and li²²⁰bu-disease but he is continually cold: seizure by Lamaštu; alternatively, it is the hand of the daughter of Anu. If the infant gets hot and cold flashes and he continually asks for much water to drink, it is seizure by Lamaštu; alternatively, it is the hand of the daughter of Anu. If the infant's abdomen gets hot and cold and he continually asks for much water to drink and he can drink it (all), it is the hand of Lamaštu. If the exhalation from an infant's right nostril is cold and from the left one hot, it is the hand of Lamaštu."²²⁰

Lamaštu produced similar symptoms in adults, but with less fatal results: "If his abdomen gets hot and cold and he continually asks for much water and he can drink it (all), it is the hand of Lamaštu. If his abdomen gets hot and cold and he continually asks for much water to bathe in, it is the hand of Lamaštu; he will get well."²²¹ In postpartum women, Lamaštu produced abdominal distension which the exorcist sought to relieve by having his patient sniff the dust of a copper kettledrum.²²² Again, the observed symptom is consistent with typhoid.²²³

Furthermore, there are indications that Lamaštu was responsible for seizures or delirium, liver problems, and/or jaundice: "If his head continually afflicts him and fever ... him all at once (and) when his illness leaves him, he has dizziness and reduced [vision] (and) he goes out of his mind and without knowing (what he is doing) he roams about as if seized by a ghost, then Lamaštu has ... upon him";²²⁴ "If he is 'struck' in his head and chills keep falling on him and his face is red or yellow (and) when he has an attack of his illness he goes out of his mind and he suffers from convulsions, it is seizure by Lamaštu; he will live for a time but he will (eventually) die (from it)."²²⁵

As for why Lamaštu was specifically associated with typhoid fever and the jaundice which accompanies it, Wiggermann²²⁶ makes the interesting, and quite plausible, suggestion that it is due to a series of word associations which made Lamaštu the (frustrated) mother (ummu) and (rejected) daughter (mārtu) of Anu responsible for illnesses involving fever (ummu) and bile (martu). It no doubt reinforced the exorcist's conclusions that a baby suffering from typhoid was observed to have the loss of appetite and abdominal distention that might be expected if it was being secretly suckled with Lamaštu's poisonous milk.²²⁷ Moreover, in pregnant

women, typhoid fever produces abortions or premature labor in sixty to eighty percent of cases.²²⁸

Whatever the exorcist's reasoning, the striking correlation between the symptoms of typhoid and the baneful effects of Lamaštu strongly suggests that the ancient Mesopotamian exorcist tailored his understanding of demons to fit what he observed to be happening to his patients, and not the other way round. One might also say that the demonic explanation which he generated to account for what he saw was closer to our current understanding of this disease as the invasion of the body by a hostile life form (the *Salmonella typhosa* bacillus) than the Greek notion of the imbalance of humors.

What is less comprehensible to a modern mind is the ancient Mesopotamians' attempt to sympathize with the invader. Like hungry ghosts whose descendants no longer provided them with funerary offerings, Lamaštu was "human" enough to inspire pity as well as fear.²²⁹ For this reason, although Lamaštu was treated with firmness and occasional violence,²³⁰ as often as not, the exorcist attempted to buy her off by making her an offering designed to send her on her way properly provisioned and/or to fulfill something of her need to mother: "I have married you to a black dog, your slave; I have poured out well water for you, (so) let up, go away, withdraw and distance yourself from this little one, child of his god.' ... (This incantation)'s ritual: (On the first day in the [mor]ning), you make a Lamaštu represented as imprisoned. You arrange offerings; you put twelve breads made from unsifted flour before her. You pour out well water for her. You marry her to a black dog. For three days you have her sit at the head of the patient.²³¹ You put the heart of a piglet in her mouth. You pour out hot broth for her. You put out dried bread for her. You give [her] a wooden šikkatu-vessel full of oil. You provide her with [provisions]. You recite the spell (every day) in the morning, noon, and evening. On the third day in the late afternoon you take her out and bury [her] in the corner of a wall."²³² Lamaštu plaques often show her riding on a boat accompanied by her various presents and by a dog and a pig which she is suckling.²³³ Accompanying her on many of these plaques is Pazuzu, the demon made famous by the movie *The Exorcist* and king of the lilû-demons,²³⁴ with whom Lamaštu may have been paired in the interests of peace for humanity.²³⁵

To regard ancient demonology as merely an added burden of fear would be to misunderstand the purpose of the exercise. Demons, like modern germs, provided the ancients not only with an explanation for undeserved misfortune, but also with a means of dealing with it. To know the nature of a demon and the motives which impelled him or her to kill one's child was to be able to devise a strategy for protecting it.²³⁶

In sum, however dreadful Lamaštu, Kūbu, the lilû-demons, the malicious afterbirth, and the ever lurking sorcerer may seem to us, or however laughable magic knots, helpful hailstones, and divinely impregnated cows, we must be careful to remember that such things were a useful supplement to, not a substitute for, what we would consider genuine medicine. Ancient Mesopotamian exorcists were perfectly capable of observing symptoms and of grouping these into apparently related complexes, just as a modern doctor would do in trying to describe a disease--not, of course, that their explanation for what was causing the observed symptoms (or for that matter why a certain medicine seemed to be helping) bears any relation to the modern understanding of diseases and their cure.²³⁷ Ancient exorcists also spent a great deal of time and effort describing plants and trying to figure out the medical uses to which they could be put. Neither were the numerous magical rituals of no medical value. In some cases, they helped to involve the patient in his or her own cure, thus ensuring that she did not diminish the benefits of the medical treatment through a poor mental attitude and, where the available treatment was not of much help, the performance of magical rituals at least consoled the survivors with the thought that everything humanly possible had been done to help the sufferer. The magical world constructed by the ancients thus prepared them to deal as best they could with their limited medical resources with the very real dangers of the natural world in which they found themselves.

Notes

1. This paper has profited by the comments of R. Beal, R. Biggs, M. Civil, W. Farber, J. Gonen, M. Schroeder, and M. Stol who read an earlier draft of this paper. Medical references are courtesy of M. Coleman, M.D. Any mistakes which remain are, of course, my own. In translations, words inside square brackets are

restorations. Sumerian words are transliterated using capital letters, and Akkadian (spoken by both Babylonians and Assyrians) using lower case bold-face. The Old Babylonian period corresponds (following the Middle Chronology) to roughly 1894-1595 B.C. and the Neo-Assyrian period to 934-612 B.C. Unless otherwise noted, the abbreviations conform to those of Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1958-1981 and/or "Assyriologie, Register," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 27-35.

2. For an evocative description of what this world might have been like, see Judith W. Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America 1750-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 13-35.

3. For details, see Walter Farber, "Lamaštu" in *RLA*, vol. 6/5-6 (1983), pp. 444-446.

4. As in *BAM* 235 and 236. The remedies are similar to those prescribed for abnormal vaginal bleeding during pregnancy (for which see below). The medical expert had his choice of various types of tampons (*BAM* 235: 1-3, 7-9; *BAM* 236: 15-17, 18-19), potions (*BAM* 235: 4-5; *BAM* 236: 5, 9-11, 12, 13, 14), and magical charms to be tied round the patient (*BAM* 235: 10-16//*BAM* 236 r. 1'-9'). Compare Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 5.50 (G. E. R. Lloyd, ed., *Hippocrates Writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978); Soranos of Ephesus, *Traité des maladies des femmes*, tr. Fr.-Jos. Herrgott, Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1895, pp. 161-165; Aetios of Amida, *The Tetrabiblon* (Book XVI), tr. James V. Ricci, *Aetios of Amida: The Gynaecology and Obstetrics of the VIth Century, A.D.*, Toronto: The Blakiston Company, 1950, pp. 64-66; Sloane 2463 (Beryl Rowland, *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health*, Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981), pp. 75-87, cf. 147-148; Maimonides, *The Medical Aphorisms of Moses Maimonides*, tr. Fred Rosner et al., vol. 2, New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1971, Treatise 16.11. Ancient Mesopotamian exorcists, unlike Greek doctors and those influenced by them, did not recommend bleeding (!) for this problem. (Soranos, p. 165, roundly condemned this practice in his fellows but seems to have been ignored by Aetios, as well as by Medieval English doctors and Maimonides.) Incredibly, doctors were still bleeding patients for hemorrhage in 19th century America (Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, p. 44)!

5. Since, indeed, many infertility problems are due to psychological factors, one expects to find magic stones and the like as in *BAM* 250: r. 1-6. To judge from Greek parallels (see Marten Stol, *Zwangerschap en Geboorte bij de Babyloniërs en in de Bijbel*, Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap 'Ex Oriente Lux' vol. 23, Leiden: Ex Oriente Lux, 1983, pp. 20-22 [with reservations]), one of the "stones to become pregnant" described in Mesopotamian lexical lists (see *CAD* E, p. 325a s.v. erû lexical section) was a hollow stone with a pebble inside, suggestive by its very appearance of the desired result. In addition to these obviously magical remedies, Mesopotamian medical experts also prescribed potions, salves and tampons (as in *BAM* 1: 18-20; *BAM* 243-244; Reiner, *ZA* 72, pp. 137-138 [STT 98]). Compare Aetios, pp. 38-43; Sloane 2463, p. 147. It is hard to say whether any of these remedies was of any use, but the Mesopotamian exorcist's advice

could hardly have been worse than Aetios' recommendation that the time just before the beginning of the monthly period (!) be chosen for intercourse (Aetios, p. 37; cf. 24).

6. If a pregnant woman was not feeling well, one could always try intercourse--recommended in diagnostic literature up to nine months (Labat, *TDP*, p. 212: 1-7). Some doctors still recommend abstaining from coitus late in the pregnancy, on the grounds that it may increase the risk of puerperal infection (Louis M. Hellman and Jack A. Pritchard, *Williams Obstetrics*, 14th edition, New York: Meredith Corporation, 1971, p. 976).

7. Ancient Mesopotamian medical literature included instructions for what are probably the world's first pregnancy tests (Reiner, *ZA* 72, pp. 124-138; cf. Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 18). Sadly, with the arrival of the Greeks in the Near East as conquerors, those parts of Mesopotamian medical science which could not be reconciled with Greek theory seem to have fallen out of use. 'Arib ibn Sa'îd al-Katib al-Qurtûbi [a 10th century Andalusian historian, physician, and poet], *Le Livre de la génération du fœtus et le traitement des femmes enceintes et des nouveau-nés*, tr. Henri Jahier and Nureddin Abdelkadir, Algiers: Librairie Ferraris, 1375 A.H./1956 A.D., p. 27 is well aware of the Greco-Egyptian type of "pregnancy test" (of the "put a garlic clove in her vagina and see if her breath smells" variety--see Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 5.59; Aetios, pp. 19, 123-124 ad VII and VIII; cf. Soranos, p. 34) but preserves no memory of the Mesopotamian method of testing for color changes produced in chemically treated tampons left in the vagina for a period of several days. The Greeks also used another type of "pregnancy test" in which a woman who had been successfully given a case of colic by the physician(!) was declared pregnant (Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 5.41). Medieval English doctors seem to have continued this extremely inhumane practice; they also administered known abortifacients (!) to determine whether a woman was (or perhaps better had been) pregnant (Sloane 2463, p. 121).

8. As in *BAM* 240: 23'-24', 25'.

9. As in *BAM* 240: 20'-22', 27'. Compare Al-Qurtûbi, pp. 48-49.

10. As in *BAM* 240: 33', 34'-35', 36'-38'. Belching and vomiting were taken to be very bad signs (Labat, *TDP*, p. 208: 81; Hunger, *SpTU* 1, no. 40: 1), as was the appearance of blood or pus (Labat, *TDP*, p. 208: 82-83, cf. 87-88).

11. There were, in ancient Mesopotamia, two professional curers, the *asû* and the *āšipu*. The former specialist treated symptoms--he set bones, stopped nosebleeds, and compounded drugs which were observed to have practical value in relieving the complaints of patients. The latter specialist (here referred to as an "exorcist") treated diseases, as these were understood by Mesopotamians--that is, he was responsible for hating away (by means of magical rituals and medicines) the demon or ghost or witch whose malevolent activities were producing the observed symptoms.

12. Ancient exorcists were well aware that a calm and undisturbed mother had a much better chance of bringing her pregnancy safely to term (Labat, *TDP*, p. 206: 77-78).

13. For this interpretation of *naḥṣātu*, see Finkel, *Afo* 27, pp. 41-42.

14. As in *BAM* 237 i 28'-29'; cf. i 30', 32', 37', 38', 40'-41' ii 16', 17', 34'-35', iii 33, iv 1, 3, 4, 5, 8. Compare (for abnormal vaginal discharge): *BAM* 237 iv 13, 14, 25-26, 26, 26-27, 34-38 (drunk); iv 11, 12 (poured into the urinary tract).

15. As in *BAM* 237 i 25'; cf. i 33', 34', 35', 36', 39', 40'-42', 43'-44', 45'-46', iii 33, iv 2, 6-7. Compare *BAM* 237 iv 9-10//*BAM* 241 ii 5'-8' (for inflammation[?] of the womb); *BAM* 237 iv 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 19-20, 20-21, 21-22, 23, 23-24, 24-25, 27-28 (for "crab" disease); iv 29-33 (for abnormal vaginal discharge).

16. As in *BAM* 237 i 26'-27'.

17. As in *BAM* 237 i 22'-24'; cf. i 31', 40'-42', 47'-48', ii 36', iii 1-3, 4-5. Compare *BAM* 237 iv 39-43 (for abnormal vaginal discharge). Depending on exactly where they tied the charm, it is, of course, possible that some sort of tourniquet was intended.

18. *BAM* 237 i 1'-16'; cf. Finkel, *Afo* 27, pp. 50-51.

19. ^{J.A.} Scurlock, *Magical Means of Dealing with Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1988 (publication planned), p. 176 (*CT* 23 15-22 i 63'-68').

20. *BAM* 237 i 7', i 22'.

21. A curious feature of this ritual is the offering in connection with lamentations of five substances: juniper, *ata'isu*, wormwood(?), *argānu*-conifer, and sagapenum(?) otherwise highly recommended for women who wish to put an end to blockages (the first two were used as fumigants [Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 3-4, 8-9] and the latter three for a moist tampon [ibid., p. 29: 10, 11-12]). Burning the first two and scattering the last three in connection with two sets of lamentations may have been intended to indicate that it was an absence of blockage (that is, what would be expected to result if one were to burn or scatter such substances as part of a medical regimen) which was the problem occasioning the patient's complaint to the gods.

22. *BAM* 237 i 9'; cf. *BAM* 237 iii 7, iv 23, 35. Compare Walter Farber, *Schlaf, Kindchen, Schlaf! : Mesopotamische Baby-Beschwörungen und -Rituale*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1989, p. 112 § 39A: 5-6//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 58 (used to prevent a miscarriage).

23. Compare Labat, *TDP*, p. 2: 2//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 87: 2; *CT* 38, pl. 8: 31-34.

24. In view of the very close similarity between a number of Neo-Assyrian remedies for excessive bleeding and the Old Babylonian texts published in Finkel, *Afo* 27, pp. 37-52, it is probable that the Old Babylonian remedies were also intended to cut off unwanted discharges and not to encourage the outflow of the waters accompanying childbirth (the author suggests both as possibilities). It should be noted that the Old Babylonian versions parallel only those remedies which involve the preparation of magical charms. The more obviously medical procedures for stopping the bleeding (such as tampons and the like) are attested only from the Neo-Assyrian period.

25. This city was the cult cite of Ea/Enki, a patron of magic, creator (with the birth goddesses) of mankind, and also master of the sweet waters under the earth (the *apsū*).

26. CBS 1509 ii 9-19 (Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 40); cf. CBS 1509 i 9-22 (ibid., p. 38).

27. Lexical lists equate this shell with "mare genitals-stone" (see *CAD* K, p. 180b s.v. *kapāšu* lexical section; cf. Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 48).

28. Cf. CBS 1509 iv 10-18 (Finkel, *Afo* 27, pp. 40, 48); CBS 1509 iii 5-20 (ibid., p. 40). Compare Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162: 15 (to prevent miscarriages).

29. CBS 10489 + 10756: 15-20 (Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 37); cf. YBC 5636: 16-21 (ibid., p. 38). Compare the cloth tied on like a sanitary napkin in order to prevent miscarriages in Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39: 13-14.

30. "If a woman has been given plants (infected with) *hate* magic (and) fluid runs copiously from her vulva" (*BAM* 237 iv 29).

31. *BAM* 237 i 2', 45', iii 33 (magnetite); for the potsherds and binding rites, see above.

32. The first few months of pregnancy were, correctly, considered the most critical. One such prescription recommends: "From the day when her(!) (need for) menstrual bandages passes from her(!) till the hundredth day, you should not take (away) the stones for the knottings for a pregnant woman" (Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163: rev. 12).

33. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39: 7-13; cf. ibid., p. 112 § 39A: 1-4//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 56-57. For the "head" of the vulva, see below, n. 74.

34. The reference is to the cloths used by Mesopotamian women as sanitary napkins (for other references, see *CAD* K, p. 157 s.v. *kannu* mng. d).

35. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39: 13-14. Compare the instructions for preparing "knottings to keep a pregnant woman from having a miscarriage" (Thureau-Dangin,

RA 18, pp. 162-163 1-7, rev. 2-12).

36. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 112 § 39A: 5-6//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 58.

37. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39: 14; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 112-114 § 39A: 7-9//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 59.

38. The inclusion in *STT* 241: 5 of magnetite (to be bound around the woman's waist), and the use not only of binding rites but also of one of the incantations quoted by incipit in a collection of remedies against miscarriages (*STT* 241: 8-28 is the full text of Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162: 26) indicates that this text also was intended to be used to prevent premature birth. In light of this, the label (*STT* 241: 29, cf. 7) is probably to be interpreted as "Incantation in order that a woman may not give birth (too) readily." Having a baby come too quickly is just as dangerous for both it and the mother as having it not come quickly enough. Contra Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 20, the absence of ittamir-stone from *STT* 241 is not significant in this regard. The stone in question is, in fact, found only in Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162: 8-25; the other remedies against miscarriages (*LKA* no. 9 [partially transliterated in Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39]; Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 112-114 § 39A; v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 56-78; and even Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, pp. 162-163: 1-7, 26-r. 1, and r. 2-12) do not include it.

39. This is quoted in full in v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 62-78//Farber, *Schlaf*, pls. 14-15: 14-39 which also notes that it was to be recited over the salve. The same incantation (Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163: r. 13-29) appears in another set of prescriptions designed to prevent sorcery-induced miscarriages (*ibid.*, p. 162-163: 7, 16-25, r. 10). Sorcerers were suspected of "entrusting" figurines of their victims to Lamaštu, daughter of Anu (*Maqlû* IV: 45-46).

40. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 114 § 40: 10-13//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 60-61. This incantation accompanied the tying on of the bracelet of šu-stone (Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 112-114 § 39A: 7-8//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 59).

41. Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110 § 39: 16-20. By process of elimination, this incantation must have been recited while tying on the band of red-colored wool (*ibid.*: 13-14, 15). Henri Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1954 (translation of *Croyances et coutumes Persanes suivies de contes et chansons populaires*, Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1938), p. 17, reports on fetuses being scolded by the midwife on taking so long in coming.

42. In view of the fact that this collection characterizes remedies to prevent miscarriages as "knottings for a pregnant woman" (Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, pp. 162-163: 7, r. 10, 12), it seems likely (with Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 4 and contra Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 41) that the ŠALPEŠ₄ KĒŠ.DA which is mentioned alongside remedies for difficult childbirth, Lamaštu and calming a crying baby in a compendium of rituals which every exorcist was supposed to know (*KAR* 44: 15), refers to miscarriage prevention as well as to the staunching of bleeding (this latter being more precisely referred to by the

rubric KA.INIM.MA UŠ KA.KĒŠ.DA.KAM).

43. The ancient exorcist would no doubt be gratified to know that a literal sewing up of an incompetent cervix has indeed been proven to effectively prevent miscarriages.

44. Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162: 8-15. Compare the similar anti-miscarriage charms described in Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, pp. 12-13.

45. *STT* 108: 33, 35.

46. It is perhaps for this reason that lexical texts identify the ittamir-stone as being conducive both to giving birth and to preventing birth (for references, see *CAD* I, p. 302b s.v. ittamir lexical section). Compare a similar charm in which kapāšu-shells(?) representing female genitalia (see above) were surrounded with magic burls before being tied on various parts of the body with the instruction "you do not untie her until she gives birth" (Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163: r. 2-12). Similarly, Aetios (pp. 29-30) recommended, in order to prevent miscarriages, that a sardonyx stone, or alternatively a stone found in the uterus of a doe or a stone which was discovered wedged into the trunk of a tree, should be hung around the upper abdomen until labor pains began and then quickly be removed. It should be noted that, although Greek doctors strongly disapproved of folkloric incantations such as those which the Mesopotamian exorcist recited over his patients to help involve them in the cure, this did not necessarily mean that they had any quarrel with amulets (the same text recommends carrying the fat of the vulva of a lioness in an ivory container or the fallen tooth of an infant which had not touched the ground in a signet ring as two of a series of methods of contraception [Aetios, pp. 25-26]).

47. The tiskur-plant's alleged power to shut off sorcerous mouths may be traced to a sort of pun or word play, based on the similarity between the plant's name (actually of unknown origin) and the Semitic tri-consonantal root skr. For similar word plays in other texts, see Farber, *JAOS* 106, pp. 447-449.

48. Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162: 16-24.

49. That such things did actually happen may readily be seen from the following, drawn from a remedy against sorcery: "If 'cutting of the breath' [has been performed against] a man by means of a roof mouse [and consequently] a slaughtered roof mouse is found in the man's house" (*BAM* 458 i 8'-9').

50. *LKA* 9 iii 2-4, cf. 5-7 (see Reiner, *Afo* 19, p. 150). The fact that the rest of this text deals with sorcery-induced miscarriages (see Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 110, § 39) points to the conclusion that, contra Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 74, the danger to be averted is a miscarriage, and not some sort of pernicious influence on the unborn child's appearance (see also Marie-Louise Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1987, pp. 53-54). The ancient Mesopotamians shared a belief, common to many cultures, that a

pregnant female's foetus may come to resemble something which she has looked at fixedly; however, the appropriate method of ensuring that the newborn will look as desired, as may readily be seen from Soranos, pp. 37-38 as well as the Mesopotamian and Biblical passages cited in Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 72-73 (*BRM* 4 12: 37), and 74-75 (Gen. 30: 37-39) is to ensure that what she looks at will induce the appropriate results. In *LKA* 9 iii 1-4 and 5-7, by contrast, the remedy is a prophylactic which is hung round the woman's neck (where she could not possibly see it). The first prophylactic is a (miniature) protective divinity in a leather bag (for the reading of the line, see Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 23 n. 26); the second contains yellow earth, and reddish yellow earth, which immediately calls to mind the yellow and reddish yellow mineral dyes which are otherwise recommended (*BAM* 237 i 1', iv 3) for profuse vaginal bleeding during pregnancy (a frequent sign of impending miscarriage).

51. As in *BAM* 240: 71'-74'. It seems unlikely that this did any good unless the nostrum was also administered orally.

52. Note this passage in a Sumerian hymn: "He (Enlil) gives her (Ninlil) the name Nintu, the Lady-who-gives-birth and the Lady-of-the-open-legs ... The [functions of] the qadištu, everything pertaining to women that no man must see" (Civil, *JAOS* 103, p. 57: 152, 154; cf. Lambert's comments on p. 65).

53. This is the reason given for similar prohibitions in North Africa (Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, London: Macmillan, 1926, vol. 2, p. 377).

54. This was still the case in colonial America; see Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, pp. 36-37.

55. It has been suggested (Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42, p. 290 w/ n. 63) that an enigmatic passage in the *Atrahasis* (I 282 [Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, p. 62]) is a direct reference to the rupturing by the midwife of the membranes of the woman giving birth with a slender rod. The interpretation is not entirely unreasonable; *Williams Obstetrics*, p. 1093 describes this procedure which is still recommended, albeit when performed with sterile instruments, as a method of inducing labor. However, it should be noted that both the reading and the interpretation of the line in question are hotly disputed (for references, see Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 56 w/ n. 326 and Addenda, p. 115).

56. This was presumably for good luck; it would have been ominous for the new mother to have the midwife or other attendants in an unhappy mood, not only because it boded ill for the baby, but because it would have upset the mother, thus increasing the chances that something would go wrong with the birth: "No conversation of a depressing character would for one moment be allowed ... Boisterous conversation during the progress of child-birth ought never to be permitted ... The only words that should then be spoken are the few words of comfort from the doctor" (Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, p. 103, cf. pp. 87-115; cf. Al-Qurtubi, p. 52).

57. This brick also appears in the myth "Enki and the World Order" as part of

the birth goddesses' insignia (Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42 (1972), p. 289 w/ n. 57).

58. This distribution of labor is also reflected in the divine sphere. Although female birth goddesses were honored in the birth ritual and celebrated in hymns and prayers as divine midwives, when appeals had to be made to divinities because things were not going well, it was from male patrons of childbirth such as the Moon-god Sin and Asalluhi/Marduk that assistance was typically sought.

59. The human pelvis is, in fact, on average 0.5% too small for the baby's head. It should also be remembered that forceps were unknown till Peter Chamberlen invented them in the 17th century A.D. In fairness to the ancients, it should be noted that forceps were something of a mixed blessing, particularly in inexperienced hands (Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, pp. 45-47, 50-57, cf. 28-29).

60. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 33-36; cf. 51-53.

61. *BAM* 248 ii 49-56, cf. 64-69.

62. The reference is probably to Nintu, the goddess who is depicted as creating mankind and performing midwifely duties in the *Atrahasis* epic (I 192-297 [Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, pp. 56-64]).

63. For this translation for šigaru, see Scurlock, *Or N.S.* 57, pp. 431-432. Van Dijk's (*Or N.S.* 42, p. 507, cf. 505) translation: "celle qui nous a tous formés pour le joug a dit: 'tu es libre!'" makes no sense and should be abandoned.

64. YBC 4603: 1-27 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 42, p. 503).

65. Indeed, in one of the incantations, the patient is explicitly described as an "adolescent" (*ardatu*): *BAM* 248 iii 34; cf. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 62; *KUB* 4, no. 13: 11.

66. Marie-Joseph Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976, p. 217 (*BA* 10/1 2: 27-r. 10).

67. *Atrahasis* S iv 51, 61 (Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, pp. 108, 110).

68. CBS 1509 iv 12 (Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 40, cf. pp. 48, 49).

69. UM 29-15-367: 15, 39-40 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, pp. 55-56); partially restored after the similar John Rylands Library, Box 24 E6 (24): 4' (*ibid.*, p. 69); on the similarity of CBS 1509 iv 12 to UM 29-15-367: 40, see Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 48 ad C iv 12.

70. There is an unpublished text (AO 4425), referred to by René Labat, "Geburt," in *RLA*, vol. 3/3 (1964), p. 178 which deals specifically with the problem: "If a woman is delayed in giving birth".

71. There is some evidence to suggest that the ancient Mesopotamians may have performed caesarean sections to rescue children from mothers who had died in childbirth (although this interpretation is disputed). For references, discussion, and bibliography, see *CAD* Š (forthcoming) s.v. šilip rēmi.

72. *BAM* 246: 1-10. Compare the prescriptions quoted in Al-Qurt'ubi, pp. 54, 57, Soranos, p. 61-63, Aetios, pp. 26-29 and Sloane 2463, pp. 121-123, 135-139, 155-157. It should be noted that the assertion (J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "Organic Diseases of Ancient Mesopotamia" in Don Brothwell and A. T. Sandison, *Diseases in Antiquity*, Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1967, p. 203) that the ancient Mesopotamians employed the gruesome procedure recommended by Celsus for extracting the foetus, in pieces, with a hook (see Soranos, pp. 221-227; Aetios, pp. 32-34, 128-130) is based on the combining of two texts one of which now has been proven to be a Neo-Assyrian land grant (Livingstone *SAAB* 2/2, p. 103: 5). Kinnier Wilson's reinterpretation of the Creation Epic in line with his theory (*JNES* 33, pp. 240-241) is also questionable.

73. *BAM* 248: iv 16.

74. This is apparently what happened in the following prescription: "When you have taken in hand the fat of a pure cow, cream from a mother cow, (and) when you have recited the spell of Eridu (and) when you have rubbed the front of the 'mouth' (and) the 'head' of her vulva with it, may (the waters) take free course like rain from heaven; may they flow abundantly like [water from a gutter on the roof of the wall] ..." (John Rylands Library, Box 24 E6 [24]: 10'-16' [v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 69]; cf. *UM* 29-15-367: 37-45 [ibid., pp. 55-57]; restored after the similar *VS* 17 33: 16-21 [ibid., p. 63]). The most reasonable interpretation of KA and SAG in this and similar contexts is as, respectively, the "mouth" (of the vulva [i.e., the entrance to the womb]) and the "head" (of the vulva [i.e., the clitoris]); to these parts should be added the "navel" (of the vulva [i.e., the peritoneum]) which appears in *BAM* 240: 30'-32' as being torn during childbirth. The greasing of the vulva to expedite childbirth is also recommended by Galen (apud Al-Qurt'ubi, p. 52).

75. The incantation from one of these remedies is described as an incantation for *aruhtum* (*VS* 17, 33: 28 [v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 63]). The latter is clearly derived from the verb *arāhu* (stative: *aruh*): "to hasten, hurry, come quickly, promptly" (Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 60; *CAD* A/2, p. 259a). To judge from the context, it is probably a feminine substantive with a meaning something on the order of "hastening/coming promptly"; compare *maruštum*: "illness" from *marāšu*: "to be ill" and *lemuttum*: "evil" from *lemēnu*: "to be bad", and note the frequent references in remedies for difficult childbirth to the baby coming out or to the woman giving birth "promptly" (*arḥiš*): *BAM* 248 ii 56, 69, iv 1, 5, 15; *BAM* 249: i 2', 4', 10', 12'; Reiner, *ZA* 72, p. 138 (*STT* 98 r. 5').

76. As in *BAM* 248 iv 12; cf. *BAM* 248 iv 13-15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29. The woman might also try eating tortoise, white pig, or vixen or chewing Kaneš oak (*BAM*

248 iv 25, 26, 27, 30).

77. *BAM* 248 iii 8-9, 52-53, iv 9, 20.

78. As in *BAM* 248 iii 7-9; cf. iv 17, 18, 19-20, cf. i 52-53. Compare *VS* 17, 33: 16-21, 28-30 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 63). Aetios (p. 24) assures the reader that a swallow's nest which has been ground and mixed with oil (as recommended in *BAM* 248 iv 18) will hasten delivery if applied to the lumbar region next to the spine.

79. *BAM* 248 iii 52-53, iv 4-5, 8-9.

80. Note that in one case, a hand massage is to be performed "as if with a stick" (*BAM* 248 iv 20).

81. The use of ghee or other animal products (and probably also of *pūru*-pot oil) is related to the myth of the Moon-god Sin and his cow, for which see pp. 147-49 of this article.

82. Analogies abound in Greek medical texts as well. Aetios' (p. 23) recommendation of the use of beaten egg whites in ointments to be used on women having difficulty giving birth was apparently inspired by the hope that it would make the birth canal similarly slippery.

83. *BAM* 248 iii 7-8.

84. *BAM* 248 ii 57-59, cf. ii 70-iii 2. This is the explanation for the choice of these particular ingredients which the exorcist shared with his patient when he recited the incantation over her.

85. As in *BAM* 248 iv 4-5, cf. 8-9. The involvement of the herdsman is in reference to the myth of the Moon-god and the cow, for which see pp. 10-12 of this article.

86. The choice may be dictated by the fact that the name for this type of wood (*e'ru*) closely resembles the verb "to be pregnant" (*erū*).

87. Since reeds were used to cut the umbilical cord after birth (see below), the choice appears appropriate enough.

88. As in *BAM* 248 iii 46-53. Compare *AUAM* 73.3094: 42-51 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 138); cf. *MLC* 1207: 22-26 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 67; cf. Finkel, *AJO* 27, p. 48); *E* 47.190: r. 7' (G. Farber, *JNES* 43, p. 314).

89. 11N-T3: 8-12 (Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332).

90. 11N-T3: 46-51 (Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332).

91. It should be noted that, contrary to what one often reads (as, for example, Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, 2nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949, p. 107; Labat, *RLA*, vol. 3/3, p. 179), the Atrahasis, although it does indeed contain the story of the original creation of mankind by Belet-ili and includes a great deal of detail about the ritual actually performed when a baby was born was not, in so far as we can tell, ever used as a sort of giant incantation to assist in childbirth. That assertion is based on a mis-reconstruction of the epic now corrected by the discovery of an Old Babylonian version (see Finkelstein, *YOS* 13, p. 10 n. 40).

92. It is striking, especially in view of the Assyrians' fearsome reputation among modern scholars for misogyny, that the two incantations which express the greatest empathy with and concern for the mother (as opposed to the complex of mother and child) are provably Assyrian compositions which have no Babylonian parallels.

93. Contra Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 36, there is nothing in this incantation which is inappropriate to the context. On the proverbial (and perfectly acceptable) shamelessness of women in travail, see also Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, p. 15.

94. This deity, the head of the Babylonian pantheon and an important god in Assyria as well was, like the Moon-god, a patron of childbirth. See, for example, Šurpu IV: 24-25, 28-29, 31; YBC 4603: 11-17 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 42, p. 503); *BAM* 248 ii 60-69; *BAM* 248 iv 6-7 (contra Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 65, the reference is to Marduk, and not to a feminine birth goddess, as the use of the masculine imperative shows). It is perhaps not irrelevant in this particular context that the Akkadian word for "womb" and "mercy" are the same (*rēmu*).

95. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 37-49. For the last lines, compare *BAM* 248 ii 46-48, 54-56.

96. After Cohen, *RA* 70, pp. 133-134; followed also by Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 45, v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, p. 7, Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 69 n. 415, and G. Farber, *JNES* 43, p. 311 w/ n. 4; Reiner, *Poetry*, pp. 91-92; cf. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, pp. 36-37.

97. G. Farber, *JNES* 43, p. 312 n. 6 suggests an opposite association, based on the fact that the Akkadian word for carnelian is feminine and that for lapis masculine, no doubt unconsciously reinforced by the fact that this fits the association of pink with girls and blue with boys in Western society. However, it should be noted that the Chinese associate red with boys and blue with girls, which means that this analogy has no independent value. More to the point, it is hardly likely that our texts would consistently mention a female child before a male one. In the ritual which follows upon the birth, male children are offered weapons and female children a spindle and kirissu or a crucible, in that order.

98. AUAM 73.3094: 2-11 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 136); MLC 1207: 2-4, 13-15 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 66); cf. E 47.190: 1-3 (G. Farber, *JNES* 43, p. 313).

99. AUAM 73.3094: 12-21 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 136); MLC 1207: 5-7, 9 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 66); cf. John Rylands Library, Box 24 E6 (24): 1'-4', 7' (ibid., p. 69); E 47.190: 4-6 (G. Farber, *JNES* 43, pp. 313-314); UM 29-15-367: 12-15, 28-31 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 55); VS 17 33: 11-13 (ibid., p. 62). *BAM* 248 i 5-9 seems originally, to judge from the traces (see Veldhuis, *ASJ* 11, p. 241), from its commentary 11N-T3: 1-2 (Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 331), and from the Akkadian version of AUAM 73.3094: 12-21 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 136), to have had: "Like a boat (for carrying) cedar, it (her boat) is full of cedar. Like a boat (for carrying) cedar fragrance, it (her boat) is full of cedar fragrance. Like a boat which is overlaid (perhaps a hearing error for 'loaded') with red carnelian, it (her boat) is full of carnelian. Like a boat which is overlaid with lapis lazuli, it (her boat) is full of lapis lazuli; (yet) she knows not if it is carnelian; she knows not if it is carnelian."

100. AUAM 73.3094: 22-23 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 136); MLC 1207: 8, 10 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 66).

101. *BAM* 248 iii 58-62; cf. i 44-50, i 62-63, ii 46-56.

102. As Stol (*Zwangerschap*, p. 69) notes, this particular metaphor is also used of unlucky persons.

103. Livingstone, *SAA* 3, pp. 37-39 (no. 15): 1-12, r. 4-9; cf. Reiner, *Poetry*, pp. 85-93; Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 68-69.

104. This myth has been extensively dealt with; for a bibliography of transliterations, translations, and discussions, see Veldhuis, *ASJ* 11, pp. 258-259; Rölli, *OrNS* 54, pp. 260-273.

105. "Without you, the barren woman cannot conceive and become pregnant" (*CAD* M/2, p. 27 s.v. *mēru* quoting *STT* 57: 65 and duplicates).

106. The reason we would give is simply that he was the god of the moon. The moon is universally associated with childbirth, presumably due to the fact that pregnancies normally last a specific number of lunar months, as well as to the obvious analogy between the waxing and waning of the moon and the expansion of the expectant mother's stomach. The resemblance of the moon crescent to ox horns (for reference to the "horns" of Šin, see *CAD* Q, pp. 137-138 s.v. *qarnu* mng. 3a) probably accounts for the presence of the cow in these myths. Perhaps strengthening the analogy, one of the words for cow (*littu*) is similar to the word for a woman who is about to give birth (*ālittu*); see Veldhuis, *ASJ* 11, p. 257 n. 4. Moreover, another word which is used for cow (*arḫu*) is similar not only to the word for new moon or month (also *arḫu*), but also to the verb used to describe an expeditious birth (*arāḫu*). Another sign of the association of the moon with cows is the occasional offerings of cow's milk to this god (Scurlock, *MMDG*, p. 238 [*BAM* 323: 96-97//*BAM* 228: 32//*BAM* 229: 24'-25']).

107. *BAM* 248 iii 10-12; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, pp. 285-286: 20-21; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 53-54.

108. It is a commonplace belief in traditional societies that if a pregnant woman is denied something she desires, the foetus which she carries will be adversely affected (see, for example, Westermarck, *Morocco*, vol. 1, pp. 586-587, who also quotes several nice examples from England; Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, p. 9; Hilma Granquist, *Birth and Childhood Among the Arabs*, Helsingfors, 1947, pp. 39-40; Susan Dorsky, *Women of Amran*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986, p. 153). Greek doctors were, of course, firm believers in never humoring the woman. (Soranus, pp. 48, 52; Aetios, pp. 20-22, 124 ad X; cf. Sloane 2463, p. 63; Maimonides, *Medical Aphorisms*, Treatise 16.23-24). In fact, it has been established that at least some of pregnant women's "odd" food desires have an actual bio-chemical basis (that is, the thing which they crave may indeed be good for them and for their babies). A prime example of this are the oyster shells the desire for which was specifically attributed by Aetios to an "excess of bloody humor" in the woman (due to the cessation of menstruation). Ground oyster shells are, in fact, now used as calcium supplements, and modern doctors recommend giving pregnant women a daily dosage of one and a half times as much calcium as would normally be required throughout the pregnancy. Since, however, the theory said that an excess of bloody humor was the problem, Aetios not only refused the woman her oyster shells, but insisted that every effort be made to make her vomit. He also recommended having her drink wine (!), although in moderation.

109. *BAM* 248 iii 13-19; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, p. 286: 21-25; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 54-56.

110. *BAM* 248 iii 54-57.

111. See v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, p. 8.

112. Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 24 suggests that this "honey plant" (Ú.LĀL) is, in fact, the same as Ú.LĀL or Akkadian *ašqulālu*, since the latter is known from other sources to be a plant for use in labor. However, if the conventional interpretation that ÚAN.KI.NU.DĪ is also to be read *ašqulālu* is correct, then the expected result of the pregnant woman's eating of this plant would have been an induced abortion (*BAM* 246: 1-7). While such a plant might well have been used to speed up a difficult labor (other abortifacients certainly were), eating it too far ahead of time would, therefore, not have been a good idea if the object was to give birth to a healthy child.

113. *UM* 29-15-367: 2-8, 19-24 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, pp. 53-55); cf. *VS* 17 33: 1-6 (ibid., p. 62).

114. *BAM* 248 iii 20-23; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, p. 286: 25-29; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 56-57. Compare *VS* 17 33: 7-10 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 62); cf. *UM* 29-15-367: 9-11, 25-27 (ibid., p. 55).

115. The name of the vessel in question is similar to the Akkadian word for "calf" (*būru*), which may explain the use of this particular oil in hastening labor.

116. *BAM* 248 iii 23-26; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, p. 286: 29-31; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 57-60 (with two daughters of Anu instead of the protective divinities); *BAM* 248 iii 36-43 (with Narundi and Naḥundi, for which see also 11N-T3: 27 [Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332]; *YOS* 11, no. 18: 10).

117. *BAM* 248 iii 26-32; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, p. 286: 32-33; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 60-61; *KUB* 4, no. 13: 6-10.

118. *BAM* 248 iii 33-35; cf. Lambert, *AS* 16, p. 286: 34-36; idem, *Iraq* 31, p. 31: 61-62; *KUB* 4 13: 11-12.

119. One of the epithets of this patron god of the herds was "he who assists pregnant (animals)" (see Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 32-33).

120. *VS* 17 34: 1-10 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 41, pp. 343-344; cf. *KUB* 4, no. 13: 15-21 and note Finkel, *Afo* 27, p. 44 n. 12). Compare *BAM* 248 i 37-43. As the ancient commentary makes clear, the reference is to a total eclipse (Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332: 17-20 and see Civil's own commentary on p. 334 ad 17ff). When eclipsed, both sun and moon were described as having horns (see *CAD* Q, p. 138 s.v. *qarnu mng.* 3b) and, no doubt, the use of the word for fold (*tarbāšu*) to describe the "halo" of these astral bodies was not irrelevant to the association of the sun and moon "weeping" (in eclipse) with the problems of the mythic cow. The Sun-god also appears together with the moon in offerings made in an attempt to postpone childbirth so as to avoid an inauspicious month (*KAR* no. 223: 8-r. 8).

121. *VS* 17 34: 11-15 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 41, p. 344; for restorations and interpretation, see Farber, *JNES* 49, p. 308).

122. For the construction, see W. Farber, *Fs. Kraus*, pp. 37-47.

123. *VS* 17 34: 16-18 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 41, p. 344).

124. What exactly this plant was is not specified; lexical lists describe a number of plants and stones "for giving (or not giving) birth" (for references, see *CAD* A/1, p. 288a s.v. *alādu* lexical section).

125. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, *The Legend of Etana*, Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1985.

126. For references and discussion, see Sjöberg, *Afo* 24, p. 43 ad 72 and v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 61 w/ n. 24. A *GI.DUR.KU*₅ of silver and forty-one of copper appear in an inventory of the temple of Ninḫursag (A 5834: 5, 15; reference courtesy M. Civil).

127. 11N-T3: 12-13 (Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332).

128. Atrahāsīs S iii 7 (Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42, p. 291 n. 67). Compare Al-Qurt'ubi, p. 56. Soranos, p. 86 notes the practice, but dismisses it as superstition of midwives.

129. In view of the fact that the cutting of the cord is usually mentioned in close association with the assignment of sex-related tools (see below), the line preserved in the commentary (11N-T3: 12 [Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332]) and partially present in AUAM 73.3094: 52-53 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 138) is probably to be translated: "Break (the reed) over his (the child's) umbilical cord and then (if it is a boy, etc.)." For a number of Sumerograms which refer to a verb or verbs meaning "to break, said of a reed", see *CAD* H, p. 171a s.v. *ḥepū* lexical section, and note that the commentary appends the explanation: "(That, i.e., the breaking is) because the reed is what cuts the umbilical cord" (11N-T3: 12-13 [Civil, *JNES* 33, p. 332]). The reed in question had previously been filled with salve (AUAM 73.3094: 42-51 [Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 138; for other examples of salve-filled reeds, see above]).

130. The context would seem to call for something which could be poured on the wound. Immanakku-stone was used in the manufacture of glass, and is described as being like river silt dotted with pebbles (for references, see *CAD* I, pp. 127-128; suggestion courtesy of M. Civil).

131. See Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 55. I have personally witnessed a cut onion being rubbed over an open scratch wound--the almost immediate result was the production of a pronounced welt and the cessation of bleeding. E. Drower (*Iraq* 5, p. 110) reports that pastes of various kinds were still being rubbed on the infant's navel in Iraq as of 1938.

132. This pail appears as part of the insignia of the birth goddess (Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42, pp. 289-290).

133. See Livingstone, *SAA* 3, p. 118 (no. 48): 15'-17', who translates the enigmatic key word (Ġ.ZUM), from context, as "phlegm". The present translation assumes a connection between this Ġ.ZUM and the verb *ḥālu* (ZUM): "to be in labor; exude liquid". Compare the term Ġ.KUM of *BAM* 237 iv 9, and Ġ.RA of *BAM* 240: 18', perhaps from emēmu (KUM) and maḥāšu (RA), respectively. Also note the formation Ġ.DAB₅ (šibtu: "agricultural holding") from šabātu (DAB₅) and Ġ.DUB (išpikū: "storage jar") from šapāku (DUB). The accompanying incantation ends with: "What do you ask of me, my lady? What may they give [you]? May they give you oxen, grain, (and) fattened sheep?" "I do not eat oxen, grain, (and) fattened sheep. Let them give me the (healthy) glow of young women, the beauty of young men. Place at my disposal unlimited medical knowledge; let the amniotic fluid(?), like ball lightning from the sky, continually fall to the earth" (Livingstone, *SAA* 3, no. 48: 8'-14'); the following incantation mentions pregnant cows going into labor: "In the temple of Belit-ili, in the sheepfold of Ninegal, the pregnant ones became pregnant, the laboring ones went into labor" (ibid.: r. 1-2).

134. "Then the midwife puts her finger into the mouth of the newborn child and gently raises its uvula" (Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, p. 14). In modern American practice, the nose and mouth of the newborn baby are suctioned to remove the amniotic fluid. A failure to do so not only results in discomfort for the baby, but can cause bronchial infections as well.

135. Römer, *AOAT* 1, p. 295: 77-78; cf. Th. J. H. Krispijn, apud Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 63-64.

136. UM 29-15-367: 46-47 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 57); *VS* 17 33: 22-23 (ibid., p. 63); MLC 1207: 27 (ibid., p. 67); AUAM 73.3094: 54-55 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 138).

137. UM 29-15-367: 48 (v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 57); *VS* 17 33: 24 (ibid., p. 63); MLC 1207: 28 (ibid., p. 67).

138. AUAM 73.3094: 56-57 (Cohen, *RA* 70, p. 138). In Akkadian, "crucible" is used as a synonym for "womb" (see *AHW*, p. 15; cf. *CAD* A/1, pp. 145-146 s.v. *agarinnu* mng. 2). For similar customs in Morocco, see Westermarck, *Morocco*, vol. 2, p. 378. As one might also expect, there was quite a bit of lore on how to tell ahead of time whether a woman was pregnant with a boy or a girl or with twins (Labat, *TDP*, pp. 200-211 quotes numerous examples; cf. Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 78-79). For similar lore among Persians and ancient Greeks, see Massé, *Persian Beliefs and Customs*, p. 10; Al-Qurt'ubi, pp. 32-33 (quoting Galen and Hippocrates); Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 5.38, 42, 48; Aetios, pp. 20, 124; cf. Maimonides, *Medical Aphorisms*, Treatise 16.25.

139. As in *BAM* 240: 30', 31'-32'. The appropriateness of the cowrie (as opposed to some other type of shell) is presumably due to its resemblance to "marc's genitals" (which is its Sumerian name).

140. As in *BAM* 240: 29'. The reference is presumably to a noticeable dislocation of the anus and not rectal prolapsus. If prolapsus (so *CAD* M, p. 245b s.v. *maqātu* 2) was meant, the treatment should have involved the replacement of the organ. In any case, rectal prolapsus is extremely rare. Curiously, ancient Mesopotamian texts make no mention of a postpartum problem which is discussed extensively by Greek doctors and which should surely not have escaped the exorcist's attention, namely a prolapsed uterus or more specifically, both to judge by the association with childbirth and the observed symptoms (hemorrhage, pain, recursion, and occasional gangrene), an inversion of the uterus. The treatment of the condition, apart from the odd doctor's insistence that the woman be hung for a day by her feet from a ladder(!) and the application of bad smelling substances to the prolapsed part and sweet-smelling substances to the nose in hopes of persuading the uterus to move back up of its own accord, is reasonably close to modern practice (compare Soranos, pp. 228-233 and Aetios, pp. 79-81 with *Williams Obstetrics*, pp. 966-968; cf. Sloane 2463, pp. 61, 99-105; Maimonides, *Medical Aphorisms*, Treatise 16.21). However, if the absence of such problems from Mesopotamian accounts of postpartum problems

is not merely an accident of the find (or due to its being left to the midwife to rectify), it does not speak well for the practical (as opposed to theoretical) expertise of Greek doctors. *Williams Obstetrics*, p. 965 describes this as a rare syndrome common only "in areas of the world where obstetrics is practiced by ignorant midwives." It should probably, in fairness, have added "by 19th century American doctors" (Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, pp. 29-31).

141. As in *BAM* 240: 39'-40'; Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 1-3 (contra *ibid.*, p. 28, this is not a series of prescriptions for a pregnant woman with colic, but for a woman who has colic [and other problems] after having given birth)); cf. *CT* 14, pl. 36, no. 79-7-8, 22 r. 5).

142. As in *BAM* 240: 17'-19'.

143. As in *BAM* 240: 59'-60', 61'-63', 64', 65', 66'. Compare Actios, pp. 88-91; Maimonides, *Medical Aphorisms*, Treatise 16.13 (treatment of inflammation of the uterus); it should be noted that there is no trace in the Mesopotamian (as opposed to the Greek) remedies of bleeding the patient, covering the pubes with dirty rags, or deliberating introducing "greasy sweat and dirt from unwashed wool" (!) into the vagina.

144. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 1-9, 14-15. A very similar treatment is prescribed by Al-Qurt'ubi, p. 57, for the same problem.

145. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 10-13; *BAM* 240: 43'-46', 47'-49', 52'-53'.

146. As in *BAM* 240: 39'-42', 55', 56'-57'; cf. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 16-17.

147. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 18, 25.

148. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 19-25; *BAM* 240: 52'-53', 54', 57', 58'.

149. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 30: 27-31; *BAM* 240: 50'-51'.

150. See *Williams Obstetrics*, pp. 971-986.

151. *Williams Obstetrics*, pp. 977, 982.

152. Compare Soranos, pp. 77-80; Actios, pp. 34-35, 130-133; Sloane 2463, pp. 145-147; Maimonides, *Medical Aphorisms*, Treatise 16.33-34; al-Qurt'ubi, pp. 56-57. Soranos preferred to fish out the placenta manually (a practice which continues today, albeit under sterile conditions and with anesthesia [*Williams Obstetrics*, pp. 962-964] or to allow it to decay and fall out by itself. The others use Soranos' procedure but usually in combination with fumigations, etc.

153. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 25-26.

154. Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 29: 26. The verb in question (DU₈) is the same as that used for the desired outpouring of amniotic fluid in childbirth incantations (*VS* 17 33: 19 [v. Dijk, *Or N.S.* 44, p. 63]; John Rylands Library, Box 24 E6 [24]: 15' [*ibid.*, p. 69]; cf. *UM* 29-15-367: 42 [*ibid.*, p. 57]).

155. As in Lambert, *Iraq* 31, p. 30: 27-31.

156. Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42, pp. 289-290.

157. *SRT* 6 iii 2 = 7 12-13 (Jacobsen, *Or N.S.* 42, p. 290 n. 59).

158. See Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 63. Burial or dumping in a river seem the obvious methods of disposal, but E. Drower also reports such jars being sealed with mud and hung from a palm tree in cases where a mother had lost other children in infancy (Drower, *Iraq* 5, pp. 108-109).

159. Labat, *TDP*, pp. 216-230.

160. Labat, *TDP*, p. 220: 31-34. Compare *ibid.*, p. 32: 1-3, p. 36: 37, p. 104: 19, p. 116: 50', p. 122: 7-9, p. 168: 5-6.

161. Labat, *TDP*, p. 166: 87-89.

162. Like the malku-demons and Anunnaki-gods, Kūbu lived in the Netherworld (Lambert, *BWL*, p. 126: 31).

163. The monster Tiamat is described as a ŠIR_{ku}-bu when the creator god Marduk is carving her up to form the universe (*Enūma Eliš* IV: 136). This passage may contain a word play; serkuppū/šerkuppū ("salt-marsh") is equated with tiamtu ("sea") in lexical lists (for references, see *CAD* S, p. 177; *AHW*, p. 1353b s.v. tiamtu[m]).

164. On this class of "demon by accident", see also Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, pp. 150-154.

165. R. Borger, *AOAT* 1, p. 4 § III: 13-14.

166. *CT* 23 10: 16; Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 178 iii 24-25//*PBS* 1/2, no. 113 iii 12-13 (as corrected by Ungnad, *ZA* 33, p. 71); *KAR*, no. 330: 5; cf. Hunger, *SpTU* 1, no. 44: 58, 67 (with duplicates--see p. 52).

167. v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 67 iii 9-12; for similar references, see *CAD* K, pp. 487-488 and Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 6, p. 398: 10'-14'. The mention of holy women in this context has to do with their role in midwifery (for which see Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 85-86).

168. See *BAM* 248 i 50, 66, ii 56, 69, iv 1, to quote only childbirth incantations.

169. See also CAD K, pp. 487-488 s.v. *kūbu* A. As for the reference to not being buried in a grave, E. Drower reports that, in early twentieth century Iraq, stillbirths were not buried in the cemetery with the adults, but under the threshold of the house or by the door of the mother's room (Drower, *Iraq* 5, p. 112). Compare, for Medieval Germany: cum aliquis infans sine baptismo mortuus fuerit, tollunt cadaver parvuli et ponunt in aliquo secreto loco ("when some infant has died without baptism, do they remove the corpse of the little one and put it in some secret place? ... [if so, the penalty is five days' penance]") apud E. Maass, *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 49, p. 205.

170. For examples of personal names formed with *Kūbu*, see Römer, *Symb. Böhl*, pp. 316-318.

171. See Johann J. Stamm, *Die Akkadische Namengebung* (Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Ägyptischen Gesellschaft 44), Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1939, p. 306.

172. It was presumably to take care of any residual ill feeling on its part that *Kūbu* received offerings in several temples at Aššur (for references, see Römer, *Symb. Böhl*, pp. 314-315).

173. Aaron Shaffer, *Sumerian Sources for Tablet XII of the Gilgamesh Epic*, Ph.D. Diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1963, p. 95: 300-301, p. 97 rev. 1-2.

174. Atrahasis I 277-288, 294-295; Atrahasis S iii 15-16 (Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, pp. 62, 64).

175. See Kilmer, *JNES* 46, pp. 211-213; for Palestine, cf. Granquist, *Birth*, pp. 61, 97-98.

176. Kilmer, *JNES* 46, p. 213; Drower, *Iraq* 5, p. 108. For similar beliefs in Algeria and Palestine, see Mathéa Gaudry, *La Société féminine au Djebel Amour et au Ksel*, Algiers: Société Algérienne d'impressions diverses, 1961, p. 183 and Granquist, *Birth*, p. 94.

177. This was certainly the case in Iraq as of 1938 (Drower, *Iraq* 5, pp. 108-110). For ancient Mesopotamia, it is interesting to note that the afterbirth is listed alongside *Kūbu* and the malformed birth (*izbu*) as possible Akkadian readings of the Sumerian A.BA.GAR.RA ("what was laid down in its [amniotic] fluid"; see CAD S, p. 264b s.v. *šilūtu* lexical section) and that what appears to be a word for the amniotic sac (*edamukku*) is equated in lexical lists with "aborted foetus" (see CAD E, p. 22b).

178. For references and discussion, see Kilmer, *JNES* 46, pp. 212-213.

179. "Let them give me clay so that I can make (man) ... Let them slaughter one god ... Let Nintu mix the clay with his flesh and his blood" (Atrahasis I 203, 208, 210-211 [Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, pp. 56, 58]).

180. For references, see Römer, *Symb. Böhl*, pp. 315-316.

181. In all the instances cited in Römer, *Symb. Böhl*, pp. 315-316, offerings made to *Kūbu* are in connection with this oven. Contra Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 76-77, Assyriologists are probably correct in thinking that Eliade's theory (that *Kūbu* symbolizes the essentially embryonic nature of metallurgy) goes well beyond the Mesopotamian evidence.

182. This is the probable function of the circle of flour on which the brick is laid in the Atrahasis (I 288 [Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, p. 62]). Compare the alternative use of a platter (scattered with earth) on which to deliver the baby and afterbirth in Iran (Kilmer, *JNES* 46, p. 213). In this case as well, the placenta and the earth are being trapped inside a magic circle represented by the edge of the platter.

183. See Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, pp. 150-154.

184. Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, pp. 131-132 i 3-ii 4/v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, no. 7: 1'-18'//*SpTU* 2, no. 6: 36-45; cf. Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, pp. 135-136 rev. i 2'-9'; Farber, *ZA* 79, p. 16: 13-24.

185. Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, p. 124 i 1-22. Enkidu answers Gilgamesh's questions on the fate of such persons as follows: "Did you see the woman who never gave birth?' 'I saw (her).' 'How does she fare?' 'Like a ruined (?) pot, she is cast down violently, she gives no man joy.' 'Did you see the young man who did not strip the garment from his wife's lap?' 'I saw (him).' 'How does he fare?' 'You offer (him) a helping rope, and he weeps over the helping rope.' 'Did you see the young woman who did not strip the garment from her husband's lap?' 'I saw (her).' 'How does she fare?' 'You offer (her) a helping reed, and she weeps over the helping reed.'" (Shaffer, *Sources*, pp. 91-92: 273-278).

186. Ancient Mesopotamian men seem to have expected to take an active role in parenting. Note: "Afterwards, he took a *qadištu* from the street; out of his love for her he married her while she was still a *qadištu*. That *qadištu* took in a (foundling) son from the street and she [put him] to a breast (filled with) human milk; he did not [know] who his (real) father and mother (were). He (the husband) treated him (his wife's adopted son) with kindness; he did not slap his cheek. He reared him; he taught him how to read and write. He made a man of him (let him grow hair on his cheeks); he caused him to marry a wife (by providing him with the necessary bride price)" (Landsberger, *MSL* 1 [Ai 7 iii 7-21]).

187. Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 126-127 § 45. In view of this unpleasant habit, it may be that the emaciated male figures, conventionally interpreted as representations of *Kūbu* (Porada, *Fs. Oppenheim*, pp. 159-166), who are shown sitting with their heads in their hands and their elbows resting on their knees on either side of a suckling goddess with infants growing out of her shoulders on a terracotta plaque in fact represent the class of *lilū*-demons. The mature bodies, emaciated appearance and

sitting posture would be quite appropriate to a demon who is described as "young man who always sits, silent and [al]one, [in] the street ... young man whose body grief has burnt" (Lackebacher, *RA* 65, p. 124 i 1-2, 9-10).

188. As in Lackebacher, *RA* 65, p. 131 i 1-2, pp. 135-136 rev. i 4'-8'; v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, no. 6: 8-11.

189. Note the dire warning in a hemerological text: "(On such and such a day) he must not go up to the roof or the *ardat-lilû* will choose him (as a husband)" (see *CAD H*, p. 119a s.v. *ḥāru* A mng. 1c [quoting *KAR* 177 rev. iii 26]).

190. Lackebachcr, *RA* 65, p. 126 ii 11-18; cf. p. 138 ii 1'-6', p. 143 i 1'-4'.

191. "They continually confront the one who does not possess a personal god. They put their hands on his hands; they put their feet on his feet; they put their neck on his neck. They exchange his self (for theirs)" (Lackebacher, *RA* 65, p. 126 ii 1-10); cf. *ibid.*, p. 132 ii 6'-9'; *ibid.*, p. 146 ii 3'-15'//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, no. 6: 20-25 (see Geller, *Afo* 35, pp. 9-11). Compare: "If a woman is sick and her attacks always come in the evening and she throws off her garments, it is seizure by a *lilû*" (Labat, *TDP*, p. 214: 13, cf. 12, 14).

192. Note v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, no. 6: 1-7; cf. Geller, *Afo* 35, pp. 7-8; Walter Farber, "ki-sikil-u₄-da-kar-ra," in *DUMU-E₂-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*, Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 11, Philadelphia: University Museum, 1989, pp. 149-153. Note also that the term *ardat lilû* means literally "lilû's girl" which might imply that these were originally young girls chosen as wives by those demons.

193. They could also simply be driven away by means of salves and fumigants (Farber, *Schlaf*, p. 126 § 45: 1-6).

194. Lackebachcr, *RA* 65, pp. 138-139 iii 9-14; cf. p. 134 iii 4'-12'.

195. Lackebacher, *RA* 65, pp. 126-128 rev. i 1'-ii 19', pp. 134-135 iii 13'-27'//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 2, no. 7: rev. 1'-13'.

196. See *CAD H*, p. 103b s.v. *ḥarīštu* A (quoting 4R 58 iii 33//*PBS* 1/2 113 iii 18).

197. For the translation, see Civil, *Oriens Antiquus* 21, pp. 1-26.

198. Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 162 iii 19-24; cf. Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 6, p. 396 ii 14'-17'.

199. Compare (Falkenstein, *LKU*, no. 33: 12-14).

200. Von Soden, *Or N.S.* 25, p. 142: 8-13. With F.A.M. Wiggermann,

"Lamaštu, Tochter van Anu," in M. Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 101, this is the most obvious interpretation of the verses in question. On the other hand, Farber, *RLA*, vol. 6, p. 445 is probably correct in trying to disassociate this passage from any connection with the Lucifer myth. Unpleasant as she might be, Lamaštu's continued presence was necessary in order to keep human population (literally) down to a dull roar: "Let there be an 'obliterator' (i.e., Lamaštu) among the people; let her seize the infant from the lap of the woman who bore it (lest the noise of mankind again become unbearable, tempting the gods to send another flood to destroy them)" (*Atrahasis* III vii 3-4 [Lambert and Millard, *Atrahasis*, p. 102]; cf. Kilmer, *Or N.S.* 41, pp. 160-177). She may have disgusted the gods enough for them to throw her from heaven, but that did not mean that what she did was necessarily in violation of cosmic order. As an ancient Mesopotamian would say: "Ea did it; Ea undid it. The god who made the earthquake is the very one who made the apotropaic ritual (to be used against the earthquake)" (Balasi in *ABL* 35 rev. 9-12 [Parpola, *LAS* p. 24]).

201. Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 174 ii 33-36.

202. *CT* 17, pl. 50: 7-19, 21-23.

203. Myhrman, *ZA* 16, pp. 174-176 ii 37-41.

204. See H. Klein, *ZA* 73, pp. 255-284 ("toggle pin"); Farber, Fs. Reiner, pp. 96-99 ("safety pin" in late texts such as the canonical Lamaštu-series).

205. v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 68-76//Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163 rev. 21-28//Farber, *Schlaf*, pls. 14-15: 14-35.

206. Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 178 iii 15-27//*PBS* 1/2, no. 113 iii 6-14 [as corrected by A. Ungnad, *ZA* 33, p. 71; Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 6, p. 400 iv 3'-9'; Farber, Fs. Reiner, p. 90.

207. See Maass, *Neue Jahrb.* 49, pp. 205, 210, 211, 214-215.

208. Falkenstein, *LKU*, no. 33: 18-22; cf. Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 102-104 § 34: 9-10; Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 174 ii 31-32, p. 178 iii 16-17; Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 6, pp. 394-395 i 1'-4'; Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163 rev. 19-20//v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 66-68; *YOS* 11, no. 19: 3-6.

209. v. Weiher, *SpTU* 3, no. 84: 62-78; Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 163: rev. 13-29. The latter text is not, contra to what one sometimes reads [for references, see Wiggermann, "Lamaštu," p. 104], concerned with childbed fever, as may readily be seen from Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, p. 162-163: 7, 16-25, and rev. 10 which specify that miscarriages and sorcerers are the problems with which these remedies are concerned. I am at a loss to account for the traditional association among Assyriologists of Lamaštu with childbed fever (similarly Wiggermann, "Lamaštu," pp. 104-105). Ancient Mesopotamian medical texts describe what seems to be puerperal infection (see p. 150 of my article), but do not blame the condition on Lamaštu.

210. Labat, *TDP*, p. 220: 24-25.
211. Labat, *TDP*, p. 220: 28; cf. p. 228: 107-108.
212. Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 102-107 § 34, p. 116 § 41.
213. Symptoms are quoted from *The Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics*, Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1983, p. 667.
214. See Kinnier Wilson, *JNES* 27, p. 245.
215. W. von Soden, *Or N.S.* 23, p. 338: 3-9.
216. See Kinnier Wilson, *JNES* 27, pp. 244-245; his interpretation is accepted by Stol, *Zwangerschap*, p. 72 and by Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", p. 104.
217. Labat, *TDP*, p. 220: 26-27.
218. Labat, *TDP*, p. 220: 30.
219. Labat, *TDP*, p. 228: 106.
220. Labat, *TDP*, p. 224: 51-54.
221. Labat, *TDP*, p. p. 118: 11-12; cf. Hunger, *SpTU* 1, no. 37: 14-15. For other references to fever, see Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", p. 102 w/ n. 25.
222. *BAM* 240: 26', cf. 28'.
223. Hippocrates, *Epidemics*.1.16 reports that postpartum women afflicted with what seems, to judge by the reported symptoms, to be typhoid might be expected to recover if epistaxis (nosebleed) occurred. Sniffing up an irritant might be expected to induce sneezing, and, since epistaxis is a common symptom of typhoid, bleeding from the nose might indeed ensue. Was the ancient Mesopotamian exorcist trying to alter the course of the disease in what he, too, believed to be a favorable direction?
224. Labat, *TDP*, p. 22: 36-37. On fevers making one go insane, compare Labat, *CBSM*, p. 122 § 56: 9-10.
225. Labat, *TDP*, p. 28: 82-83; cf. p. 72: 11. For other references, see Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", p. 104. Stol, *Zwangerschap*, pp. 71-72 argues that Lamaštu was also held responsible for icterus neonatorum (physiologic jaundice of the newborn), a condition which still affects about one third of all babies (*Williams Obstetrics*, p. 488). But would this common and relatively harmless condition really be confused with typhoid? One must be careful not to assume that every case of yellowish skin color among children was blamed on Lamaštu. The ancient

Mesopotamians recognized a number of different varieties of jaundice at least one of which (*ahhāzu*) was detected in infants (Labat, *TDP*, p. 224: 59). Moreover, tawny patches or yellow color due to ultimate liver failure, when accompanied by suffocation and foul odor were correctly isolated as a separate syndrome called "hand of Gula" (known to us as diphtheria--see Kinnier Wilson, "Organic Diseases," p. 205): "If the infant's flesh is spotted with yellow, it is the hand of Gula (Labat, *TDP*, p. 226: 76, cf. 77); "If the infant is (now) red and (now) yellow, it is the hand of Gula" (ibid. p. 226: 86); "If the infant is suffocating and his flesh is yellow, it is the hand of Gula. If the infant is suffocating, will not drink from the breast, and his body is yellow, it is the hand of Gula" (ibid., p. 228: 92-93, cf. p. 230: 118); "If the infant's intestines are constricted with cramps and his body is yellow, *bu'sānu* (stinking odor) has seized him; it is the hand of Gula" (ibid., p. 228: 96). Fever is also correctly associated with "hand of Gula" (ibid., p. 228: 90; cf. 226: 89) which shows that the combination child-fever-yellow did not automatically lead the ancient exorcist to the conclusion that he was dealing with Lamaštu.

226. "Lamaštu", p. 105.

227. Note the lexical equation of "Lamaštu the obliterator" with "she who feeds (babies) with a snake's fang" (*AHW* 845a).

228. *Williams Obstetrics*, p. 814.

229. See the remarks in Scurlock, *MMDG*, p. 57.

230. As in Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 160 ii 23-27, p. 194 rev. 34-38.

231. This was to encourage the demon to leave the patient and to move into her figurine (see Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", p. 107).

232. Myhrman, *ZA* 16, pp. 154-156 i 14-16, 22-29 (restored from p. 192 rev. 20-25); cf. pp. 162-166 iii 25-36, iv 3-11, pp. 170-172 i 41-47, pp. 192-194 rev. 26-33; Nougayrol, *Ugaritica* 6, pp. 396-397 ii 22'-23'. For a description of the complete ritual, see Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", pp. 107-109.

233. For descriptions of such plaques, see Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, pp. 171-186 and additional material collected in Farber, *RLA*, vol. 6, pp. 441-444, Wiggermann, "Lamaštu", pp. 96-98, 109-115, 116 and Idem, *Babylonian Prophylactic Figures: The Ritual Texts*, Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1986, p. 10. For the close connection between these plaques and rituals such as those described above, see Farber, *Fs. Reiner*, pp. 85-105.

234. Thureau-Dangin, *RA* 18, pp. 171-183, 189-194.

235. See Lackenbacher, *RA* 65, pp. 151-152.

236. This is true even in the case of simple amulets; these could be rendered

more effective by the recitation of an incantation which contained the names and/or characteristics of the attacking demon (for examples, see Myhrman, *ZA* 16, p. 154 i 1-10, pp. 174-176 ii 25-58, pp. 184-186 obv. 24-48; cf. pp. 168-170 i 1-33, p. 188-192 obv. 48-55, 56-rev. 15; Farber, *Schlaf*, pp. 102-104 § 34 [for a salve or fumigant]).

237. On the other hand, the presence of demons made it unnecessary to blame all "female diseases" on "natural" causes, a desideratum which led the Greeks to generate the curious doctrine which held the wandering uterus responsible for "hysteria" (Soranus, pp. 169-176; Aetios, pp. 70-76; cf. Sloane 2463, pp. 87-97).

